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THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS OF JOHN DRYDEN, Esq;

Containing all his

ORIGINAL POEMS, TALES,

AND

TRANSLATIONS,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

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TO

HIS GRACE THE

DUKE of ORMOND.

Anno 1699.

MY LORD,

SOME eſtates are held in England, by paying a fine at the change of every Lord: I have enjoyed the patronage of your family, from the time of your excellent grandfather to this preſent day. I have dedicated the tranſlation of the lives of Plutarch to the firſt Duke; and have celebrated the memory of your heroic father. Though I am very ſhort of the age of Neſtor, yet I have lived to a third generation of your houſe; and by your Grace's favour am admitted ſtill to hold from you by the ſame tenure.

I am not vain enough to boaſt have deſerved the value of ſo illuſtr line; but my fortune is the greater, for three deſcents they have been pl to diſtinguiſh my poems from tho other men; and have accordingly r me their peculiar care. May it be mitted me to ſay, That as your gra father and father were cheriſhed and ador with honours by two ſucceſſive monarc ſo I have been eſteemed and patronized the grandfather, the father, and the ſc deſcended from one of the moſt ancie moſt conſpicuous, and moſt deſerving f milies in Europe.

It is true, that by delaying the payme of my laſt fine, when it was due by you Grace's acceſſion to the titles and patrimo nies of your houſe, I may ſeem, in rigou of law, to have made a forfeiture of my claim; yet my heart has always been devoted to your ſervice: and ſince you have been graciouſly pleaſed, by your permiſſion of this addreſs, to accept the tender of my duty, it is not yet too late to lay theſe volumes at your feet.

The world is ſenſible that you worthily ſucceed, not only to the honours of your anceſtors,

anceſtors, but alſo to their virtues. The long chain of magnanimity, courage, eaſineſs of acceſs, and deſire of doing good even to the prejudice of your fortune, is ſo far from being broken in your Grace, that the precious metal yet runs pure to the neweſt link of it: which I will not call the laſt, becauſe I hope and pray, it may deſcend to late poſterity: and your flouriſhing youth, and that of your excellent Ducheſs, are happy omens of my wiſh.

It is obſerved by Livy and by others, that ſome of the nobleſt Roman families retained a reſemblance of their anceſtry, not only in their ſhapes and features, but alſo in their manners, their qualities, and the diſtinguiſhing characters of their minds: ſome lines were noted for a ſtern, rigid virtue, ſavage, haughty, parſimonious, and unpopular: others were more ſweet, and affable; made of a more pliant paſte, humble, courteous, and obliging; ſtudious of doing charitable offices, and diffuſive of the goods which they enjoyed. The laſt of theſe is the proper and indelible character of your Grace's family. God Almighty has endued you with a ſoftneſs, a

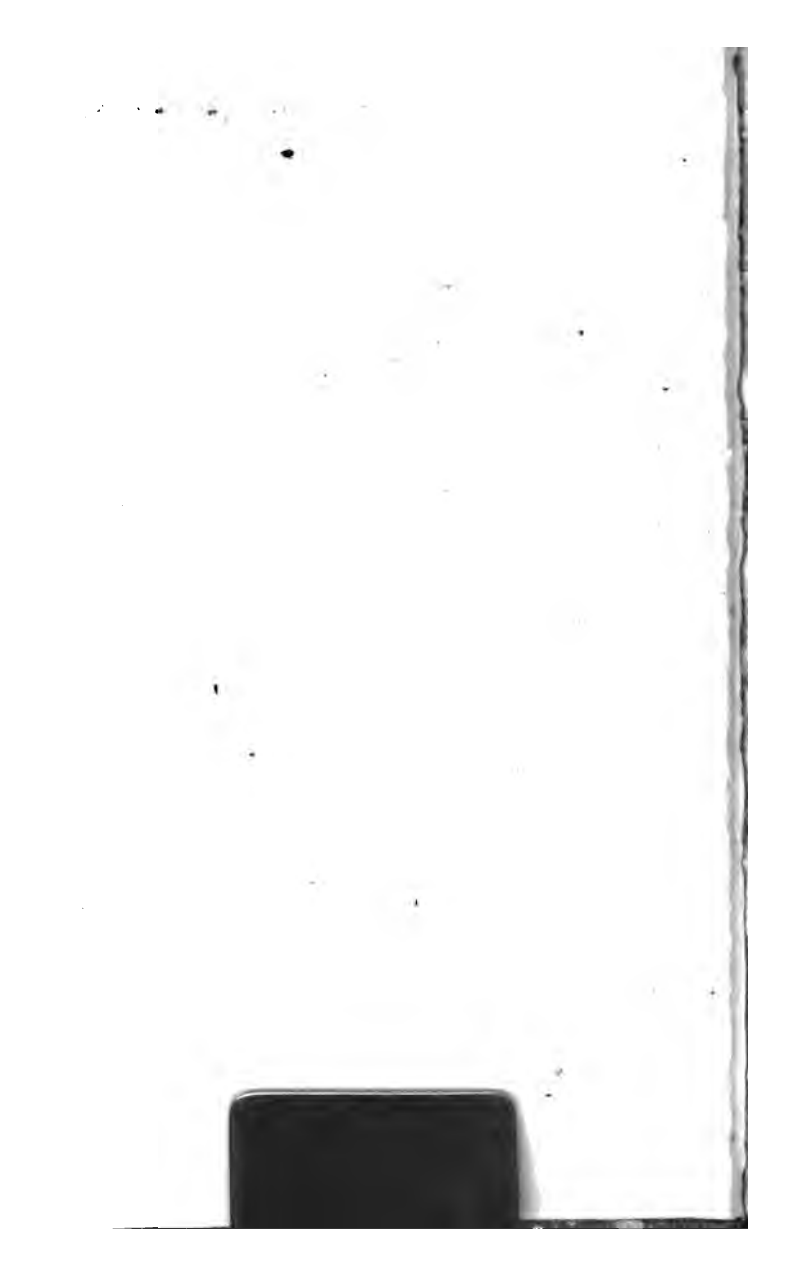
beneficence, an attractive behaviour winning on the hearts of others; and ſo ſenſible of their miſery, that the wounds of fortune ſeem not inflicted on them, but on yourſelf. You are ſo ready to redreſs, that you almoſt prevent their wiſhes, and always exceed their expectations: as if what was yours, was not your own, and not given you to poſſeſs, but to beſtow on wanting merit. But this is a topic which I muſt caſt in ſhades, leſt I offend your modeſty, which is ſo far from being oſtentatious of the good you do, that it bluſhes even to have it known: and therefore I muſt leave you to the ſatisfaction and teſtimony of your own conſcience, which though it be a ſilent panegyric, is yet the beſt.

You are ſo eaſy of acceſs, that Poplicola was not more, whoſe doors were opened on the outſide to ſave the people even the common civility of aſking entrance; where all were equally admitted; where nothing that was reaſonable was denied; where misfortune was a powerful recommendation, and where (I can ſcarce forbear ſaying) that want itſelf was a powerful mediator, and was next to merit.

The hiſtory of Peru aſſures us, that their Incas, above all their titles, eſteemed that the higheſt, which called them Lovers of the poor: a name more glorious than the Felix, Pius, and Auguſtus of the Roman emperors; which were epithets of flattery, deſerved by few of them: and not running in a blood like the perpetual gentleneſs, and inherent goodneſs of the Ormond Family.

Gold, as it is the pureſt, ſo it is the ſofteſt, and moſt ductile of all metals; iron, which is the hardeſt, gathers ruſt, corrodes itſelf; and is therefore ſubject to corruption: it was never intended for coins and medals, or to bear the faces and inſcriptions of the great. Indeed it is fit for armour, to bear off inſults, and preſerve the wearer in the day of battle: but the danger once repelled, it is laid aſide by the brave, as a garment too rough for civil converſation: a neceſſary guard in war, but too harſh and cumberſome in peace, and which keeps off the embraces of a more humane life.

For this reaſon, my lord, though you have courage in an heroical degree, yet I aſcribe it to you, but as your ſecond attribute:



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double obligation, you have early cultivated the genius you have to arms, that when the ſervice of Britain or Ireland ſhall require your courage and your conduct, you may exert them both to the benefit of either country. You began in the cabinet what you afterwards practiſed in the camp; and thus both Lucullus and Cæſar (to omit a crowd of ſhining Romans) formed themſelves to war by the ſtudy of hiſtory, and by the examples of the greateſt captains, both of Greece and Italy, before their time. I name thoſe two commanders in particular, becauſe they were better read in chronicle than any of the Roman leaders; and that Lucullus in particular, having only the theory of war from books, was thought fit, without practice, to be ſent into the field, againſt the moſt formidable enemy of Rome. Tully indeed was called the learned conſul in deriſion; but then he was not born a ſoldier: his head was turned another way: when he read the Tacticks, he was thinking on the bar, which was his field of battle. The knowledge of warfare is thrown away on a general who dares not make uſe of what he knows. I commend it only in a man of courage

courage and reſolution; in him it will direct his martial ſpirit; and teach him the way to the beſt victories, which are thoſe that are leaſt bloody; and which, though atchieved by the hand, are managed by the head. Science diſtinguiſhes a man of honour from one of thoſe athletic brutes whom undeſervedly we call heroes. Curſed be the poet, who firſt honoured with that name a mere Ajax, a man-killing idiot. The Ulyſſes of Ovid upbraids his ignorance, that he underſtood not the ſhield for which he pleaded: there was engraven on it, plans of cities, and maps of countries, which Ajax could not comprehend, but looked on them as ſtupidly as his fellow-beaſt the lion. But on the other ſide, your Grace has given yourſelf the education of his rival; you have ſtudied every ſpot of ground in Flanders, which for theſe ten years paſt has been the ſcene of battles and of ſieges. No wonder if you performed your part with ſuch applauſe on a theatre which you underſtood ſo well.

If I deſigned this for a poetical encomium, it were eaſy to enlarge on ſo copi-

ous

ous a ſubject; but confining myſelf to the ſeverity of truth, and to what is becoming me to ſay, I muſt not only paſs over many inſtances of your military ſkill, but alſo thoſe of your aſſiduous diligence in the war: and of your perſonal bravery, attended with an ardent thirſt of honour; a long train of generoſity; profuſeneſs of doing good; a ſoul unſatisfied with all it has done; and an unextinguiſhed deſire of doing more. But all this is matter for your own hiſtorians; I am, as Virgil ſays, *Spatiis excluſus iniquis.*

Yet not to be wholly ſilent of all your charities, I muſt ſtay a little on one action, which preferred the relief of others to the conſideration of yourſelf. When, in the battle of Landen, your heat of courage (a fault only pardonable to your youth) had tranſported you ſo far before your friends, that they were unable to follow, much leſs to ſuccour you; when you were not only dangerouſly, but in all appearance mortally wounded, when in that deſperate condition you were made priſoner, and carried to Namur, at that time in poſſeſſion of the French; then it was, my Lord, that you

you took a conſiderable part of what was remitted to you of your own revenues, and as a memorable inſtance of your heroic charity, put it into the hands of count Guiſcard, who was governor of the place, to be diſtributed among your fellow-priſoners. The French commander, charmed with the greatneſs of your ſoul, accordingly conſigned it to the uſe for which it was intended by the donor: by which means the lives of ſo many miſerable men were ſaved, and a comfortable proviſion made for their ſubſiſtence, who had otherwiſe periſhed, had not you been the companion of their misfortune: or rather ſent by Providence, like another Joſeph, to keep out famine from invading thoſe, whom in humility you called your brethren. How happy was it for thoſe poor creatures, that your Grace was made their fellow-ſufferer? and how glorious for you, that you choſe to want, rather than not relieve the wants of others? The heathen poet, in commending the charity of Dido to the Trojans, ſpoke like a chriſtian: *Non ignara mali, miſeris ſuccurrere diſco.* All men, even thoſe of a different intereſt, and

contrary

contrary principles, must praise this action, as the most eminent for piety, not only in this degenerate age, but almost in any of the former; when men were made *de meliore luto*; when examples of charity were frequent, and when they were in being, *Teucri pulcherrima proles, magnanimi heroes nati melioribus annis.* No envy can detract from this: it will shine in history; and like swans, grow whiter the longer it endures: and the name of ORMOND will be more celebrated in his captivity, than in his greatest triumphs.

But all actions of your grace are of a piece; as waters keep the tenor of their fountains: your compassion is general, and has the same effect as well on enemies as friends. It is so much in your nature to do good, that your life is but one continued act of placing benefits on many, as the sun is always carrying his light to some part or other of the world: and were it not that your reason guides you where to give, I might almost say that you could not help bestowing more, than is consisting with the fortune of a private man, or with the will of any but an Alexander.

What

What wonder is it then, that being born for a bleſſing to mankind, your ſuppoſed death in that engagement was ſo generally lamented through the nation! The concernment for it was as univerſal as the loſs: and though the gratitude might be counterfeit in ſome, yet the tears of all were real. Where every man deplored his private part in that calamity, and even thoſe, who had not taſted of your favours, yet built ſo much on the fame of your beneficence, that they bemoaned the loſs of their expectations.

This brought the untimely death of your great father into freſh remembrance; as if the ſame decree had paſſed on two ſhort ſucceſſive generations of the virtuous; and I repeated to myſelf the ſame verſes, which I had formerly applied to him: *Oſtendunt terris hunc tantùm fata, nec ultrà eſſe ſinunt.* But to the joy not only of all good men, but of mankind in general, the unhappy omen took not place. You are ſtill living to enjoy the bleſſings and applauſe of all the good you have performed, the prayers of multitudes whom you have obliged, for your long proſperity; and that your

power of doing generous and charitable actions may be as extended as your will; which is by none more zealously desired than by

Your GRACE's

most humble,

most obliged, and

most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN.

PREFACE

PREFIXED TO THE

FABLES.

IT is with a poet as with with a man who deſigns to build, and is very exact, as he ſuppoſes, in caſting up the coſt beforehand; but generally ſpeaking, he is miſtaken in his account, and reckons ſhort in the expence he firſt intended: he alters his mind as the work proceeds, and will have this or that convenience more, of which he had not thought when he began. So has it happened to me: I have built a houſe, where I intended but a lodge: yet with better ſucceſs than a certain nobleman, who, beginning with a dog-kennel, never lived to finiſh the palace he had contrived.

From tranſlating the firſt of Homer's Iliads (which I intended as an eſſay to the whole work) I proceeded to the tranſlation of the twelfth book of Ovid's Metamorphoſes, becauſe it contains, among other things, the cauſes, the beginning, and ending of the Trojan war: here I ought in reaſon to have ſtopped; but the ſpeeches of Ajax and Ulyſſes lying next in my way, I could not balk them. When I had compaſſed them, I was ſo taken with the former part of the fifteenth book, (which is the maſter-piece of the whole Metamorphoſes) that I enjoined myſelf the pleaſing taſk of rendering it into Engliſh. And now

I found, by the number of my verſes, that they began to ſwell intō a little volume; which gave me an occaſion of looking backward on ſome beauties of my author, in his former books: there occurred to me the hunting of the boar, Cinyras and Myrrha, the good-natur'd ſtory of Baucis and Philemon, with the reſt, which I hope I have tranſlated cloſely enough, and given them the ſame turn of verſe which they had in the original; and this, I may ſay without vanity, is not the talent of every poet: he who has arrived the neareſt to it, is the ingenious and learned Sandys, the beſt verſifier of the former age; if I may properly call it by that name, which was the former part of this concluding century. For Spenſer and Fairfax both flouriſhed in the reign of queen Elizabeth; great maſters in our language; and who ſaw much farther into the beauties of our numbers, than thoſe who immediately followed them. Milton was the poetical ſon of Spenſer, and Mr. Waller of Fairfax; for we have our lineal deſcents and clans, as well as other families: Spenſer more than once inſinuates, that the ſoul of Chaucer was transfuſed into his body; and that he was begotten by him two hundred years after his deceaſe. Milton has acknowledged to me, that Spenſer was his original; and many beſides myſelf have heard our famous Waller own, that he derived the harmony of his numbers from the Godfrey of Bulloign, which was turned into Engliſh by Mr. Fairfax. But to return: having done with Ovid for this time, it came into my mind, that our old Engliſh poet Chaucer in many things reſembled him, and that with no diſadvantage on the ſide of the modern author, as I ſhall endeavour to prove when I compare them: and as I am, and always have been ſtudious to promote the

the honour of my native country, ſo I ſoon reſolved to put their merits to the trial, by turning ſome of the Canterbury tales into our language, as it is now refined; for by this means both the poets being ſet in the ſame light, and dreſſed in the ſame Engliſh habit, ſtory to be compared with ſtory, a certain judgment may be made betwixt them, by the reader, without obtruding my opinion on him: or if I ſeem partial to my countryman, and predeceſſor in the laurel, the friends of antiquity are not few: and beſides many of the learned, Ovid has almoſt all the beaux, and the whole fair ſex, his declared patrons. Perhaps I have aſſumed ſomewhat more to myſelf than they allow me; becauſe I have adventured to ſum up the evidence: but the readers are the jury; and their privilege remains entire to decide according to the merits of the cauſe, or if they pleaſe, to bring it to another hearing, before ſome other court. In the mean time, to follow the thread of my diſcourſe, (as thoughts, according to Mr. Hobbs, have always ſome connexion) ſo from Chaucer I was led to think on Boccace, who was not only his contemporary, but alſo purſued the ſame ſtudies; wrote novels in proſe, and many works in verſe; particularly is ſaid to have invented the octave rhyme, or ſtanza of eight lines, which ever ſince has been maintained by the practice of all Italian writers, who are, or at leaſt aſſume the title of, Heroic Poets: he and Chaucer, among other things, had this in common, that they refined their mother tongues; but with this difference, that Dante had begun to file their language, at leaſt in verſe, before the time of Boccace, who likewiſe received no little help from his maſter Petrarch. But the reformation of their proſe was wholly owing to Boccace himſelf, who is yet the ſtandard

of purity in the Italian tongue; though many of his phraſes are become obſolete, as in proceſs of time it muſt needs happen. Chaucer (as you have formerly been told by our learned Mr. Rymer) firſt adorned and amplified our barren tongue from the Provencall, which was then the moſt poliſhed of all the modern languages; but this ſubject has been copiouſly treated by that great critic, who deſerves no little commendation from us his countrymen. For theſe reaſons of time, and reſemblance of genius in Chaucer and Boccace, I reſolved to join them in my preſent work; to which I have added ſome original papers of my own; which whether they are equal or inferior to my other poems, an author is the moſt improper judge; and therefore I leave them wholly to the mercy of the reader. I will hope the beſt, that they will not be condemned; but if they ſhould, I have the excuſe of an old gentleman, who mounting on horſeback before ſome ladies, when I was preſent, got up ſomewhat heavily, but deſired of the fair ſpectators, that they would count fourſcore and eight before they judged him. By the mercy of God, I am already come within twenty years of his number, a cripple in my limbs; but what decays are in my mind, the reader muſt determine. I think myſelf as vigorous as ever in the faculties of my ſoul, excepting only my memory, which is not impaired to any great degree; and if I loſe not more of it, I have no great reaſon to complain. What judgment I had, increaſes rather than diminiſhes; and thoughts, ſuch as they are, come crowding in ſo faſt upon me, that my only difficulty is to chuſe or to reject; to run them into verſe, or to give them the other harmony of proſe. I have ſo long ſtudied and practiſed both, that they are grown into a habit, and become

familiar to me. In short, though I may lawfully plead some part of the old gentleman's excuse; yet I will reserve it till I think I have greater need, and ask no grains of allowance for the faults of this my present work, but those which are given of course to human frailty. I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time in which I writ it, or the several intervals of sickness: they who think too well of their own performances, are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time their works have cost them; and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect? and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges, as to thrust their indigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better?

With this account of my present undertaking, I conclude the first part of this discourse: in the second part, as at a second sitting, though I alter not the draught, I must touch the same features over again, and change the dead colouring of the whole. In general I will only say, that I have written nothing which savours of immorality or profaneness; at least, I am not conscious to myself of any such intention. If there happen to be found an irreverent expression, or a thought too wanton, they are crept into my verses through my inadvertency; if the searchers find any in the cargo, let them be staved or forfeited, like contraband goods; at least, let their authors be answerable for them, as being but imported merchandise, and not of my own manufacture. On the other side, I have endeavoured to choose such fables, both ancient and modern, as contain in each of them some instructive moral, which I could prove

by induction, but the way is tedious; and they leap foremoſt into fight, without the reader's trouble of looking after them. I wiſh I could affirm with a ſafe conſcience, that I had taken the ſame care in all my former writings; for it muſt be owned, that ſuppoſing verſes are never ſo beautiful or pleaſing, yet if they contain any thing which ſhocks religion, or good manners, they are at beſt, what Horace ſays of good numbers without good ſenſe, *Verſus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.* Thus far, I hope, I am right in court, without renouncing my other right of ſelf-defence, where I have been wrongfully accuſed, and my ſenſe wire-drawn into blaſphemy or bawdry, as it has often been by a religious lawyer, in a late pleading againſt the ſtage; in which he mixes truth with falſhood, and has not forgotten the old rule of calumniating ſtrongly, that ſomething may remain.

I reſume the thread of my diſcourſe with the firſt of my tranſlation, which was the firſt Iliad of Homer. If it ſhall pleaſe God to give me longer life, and moderate health, my intentions are to tranſlate the whole Ilias; provided ſtill that I meet with thoſe encouragements from the public, which may enable me to proceed in my undertaking with ſome chearfulneſs. And this I dare aſſure the world before-hand, that I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleaſing taſk than Virgil, (though I ſay not the tranſlation will be leſs laborious.) For the Grecian is more according to my genius, than the Latin poet. In the works of the two authors we may read their manners, and natural inclinations, which are wholly different. Virgil was of a quiet, ſedate temper; Homer was violent, impetuous, and full of fire. The chief talent of Virgil was propriety of thoughts, and ornament of words: Homer was rapid in his thoughts, and took all the liberties

berties both of numbers, and of expreſſions, which his language, and the age in which he lived, allowed him: Homer's invention was more copious, Virgil's more confined: ſo that if Homer had not led the way, it was not in Virgil to have begun heroic poetry: for, nothing can be more evident, than that the Roman poem is but the ſecond part of the Ilias; a continuation of the ſame ſtory: and the perſons already formed: the manners of Æneas are thoſe of Hector ſuperadded to thoſe which Homer gave him. The Adventures of Ulyſſes in the Odyſſeis are imitated in the firſt Six Books of Virgil's Æneis: and though the accidents are not the ſame, (which would have argued him of a ſervile copying, and total barrenneſs of invention) yet the ſeas were the ſame, in which both the heroes wandered; and Dido cannot be denied to be the poetical daughter of Calypſo. The ſix latter books of Virgil's poem are the four and twenty Iliads contracted: a quarrel occaſioned by a lady, a ſingle combat, battles fought, and a town beſieged. I ſay not this in derogation to Virgil, neither do I contradict any thing which I have formerly ſaid in his juſt praiſe: for his Epiſodes are almoſt wholly of his own invention: and the form, which he has given to the telling, makes the tale his own, even though the original ſtory had been the ſame. But this proves, however, that Homer taught Virgil to deſign: and if invention be the firſt virtue of an Epic poet, then the Latin poem can only be allowed the ſecond place. Mr. Hobbs, in the preface to his own bald tranſlation of the Ilias, (ſtudying poetry as he did mathematicks, when it was too late) Mr. Hobbs, I ſay, begins the praiſe of Homer where he ſhould have ended it. He tells us, that the firſt beauty of an Epic poem conſiſts in diction, that is,

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in the choice of words, and harmony of numbers: now, the words are the colouring of the work, which in the order of nature is laſt to be conſidered. The deſign, the diſpoſition, the manners, and the thoughts, are all before it: where any of thoſe are wanting or imperfect, ſo much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life; which is in the very definition of a poem. Words indeed, like glaring colours, are the firſt beauties that ariſe, and ſtrike the ſight: but if the draught be falſe or lame, the figures ill-diſpoſed, the manners obſcure or inconſiſtent, or the thoughts unnatural, then the fineſt colours are but daubing, and the piece is a beautiful monſter at the beſt. Neither Virgil nor Homer were deficient in any of the former beauties; but in this laſt, which is expreſſion, the Roman poet is at leaſt equal to the Grecian, as I have ſaid elſewhere; ſupplying the poverty of his language by his muſical ear, and by his diligence. But to return: our two great poets, being ſo different in their tempers, one choleric and ſanguine, the other phlegmatic and melancholic: that which makes them excel in their ſeveral ways, is, that each of them has followed his own natural inclination, as well in forming the deſign, as in the execution of it. The very heroes ſhew their authors; Achilles is hot, impatient, revengeful, *Impiger, Iracundus, inexorabilis, acer*, &c. Æneas patient, conſiderate, careful of his people, and merciful to his enemies: ever ſubmiſſive to the will of heaven, *quò fata, trahunt, retrahuntque, ſequamur*. I could pleaſe myſelf with enlarging on this ſubject, but am forced to defer it to a fitter time. From all I have ſaid I will only draw this inference, that the action of Homer being more full of vigour than that of Virgil, according to the temper of the writer, is of conſequence more

more pleaſing to the reader. One warms you by degrees; the other ſets you on fire all at once, and never intermits his heat. 'Tis the ſame difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demoſthenes, and Tully. One perſuades; the other commands. You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the ſecond book, (a graceful flattery to his countrymen;) but he haſtens from the ſhips, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine. From thence he hurries on his action with variety of events, and ends it in leſs compaſs than two months. This vehemence of his, I confeſs, is more ſuitable to my temper; and therefore I have tranſlated his firſt book with greater pleaſure than any part of Virgil: but it was not a pleaſure without pains: the continual agitations of the ſpirits muſt needs be a weakning of any conſtitution, eſpecially in age; and many pauſes are required for refreſhment betwixt the heats; the Iliad of itſelf being a third part longer than all Virgil's works together.

This is what I thought needful in this place to ſay of Homer. I proceed to Ovid and Chaucer; conſidering the former only in relation to the latter. With Ovid ended the golden age of the Roman tongue: from Chaucer the purity of the Engliſh tongue began. The manners of the poets were not unlike: both of them were well-bred, well-natured, amorous, and libertine, at leaſt in their writings, it may be alſo in their lives. Their ſtudies were the ſame, philoſophy and philology. Both of them were known in aſtronomy, of which Ovid's books of the Roman feaſts, and Chaucer's treatiſe of the Aſtrolabe, are ſufficient witneſſes. But Chaucer was likewiſe an aſtrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Perſius, and Manilius. Both writ

writ with wonderful facility and clearneſs: neither were great inventors; for Ovid only copied the Grecian fables; and moſt of Chaucer's ſtories were taken from his Italian contemporaries, or their predeceſſors. Boccace his Decameron was firſt publiſhed; and from thence our Engliſhman has borrowed many of his Canterbury tales: yet that of Palamon and Arcite was written in all probability by ſome Italian wit, in a former age; as I ſhall prove hereafter: the tale of Grizild was the invention of Petrarch; by him ſent to Boccace; from whom it came to Chaucer: Troilus and Creſſida was alſo written by a Lombard author; but much amplified by our Engliſh tranſlator, as well as beautified; the genius of our countrymen in general being rather to improve an invention, than to invent themſelves; as is evident not only in our poetry, but in many of our manufactures. I find I have anticipated already, and taken up from Boccace before I come to him: but there is ſo much leſs behind; and I am of the temper of moſt kings, who love to be in debt, are all for preſent money, no matter how they pay it afterwards: beſides, the nature of a preface is rambling; never wholly out of the way, nor in it. This I have learned from the practice of honeſt Montaign, and return at my pleaſure to Ovid and Chaucer, of whom I have little more to ſay. Both of them built on the inventions of other men; yet ſince Chaucer had ſomething of his own, as The Wife of Bath's Tale, The Cock and the Fox, which I have tranſlated, and ſome others, I may juſtly give our countryman the precedence in that part; ſince I can remember nothing of Ovid which was wholly his. Both of them underſtood the manners, under which name I comprehend the paſſions, and, in a larger ſenſe, the deſcriptions of perſons, and their very habits: for an example

example, I ſee Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me, as if ſome antient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the Canterbury tales, their humours, their features, and the very dreſs, as diſtinctly as if I had ſupped with them at the Tabard in Southwark: yet even there too the figures in Chaucer are much more lively, and ſet in a better light: which though I have not time to prove; yet I appeal to the reader, and am ſure he will clear me from partiality. The thoughts and words remain to be conſidered in the compariſon of the two poets; and I have ſaved myſelf one half of that labour, by owning that Ovid lived when the Roman tongue was in its meridian; Chaucer, in the dawning of our language: therefore that part of the compariſon ſtands not on an equal foot, any more than the diction of Ennius and Ovid; or of Chaucer and our preſent Engliſh. The words are given up as a poſt not to be defended in our poet, becauſe he wanted the modern art of fortifying. The thoughts remain to be conſidered: and they are to be meaſured only by their propriety; that is, as they flow more or leſs naturally from the perſons deſcribed, on ſuch and ſuch occaſions. The vulgar judges, which are nine parts in ten of all nations, who call conceits and jingles wit, who ſee Ovid full of them, and Chaucer altogether without them, will think me little leſs than mad, for preferring the Engliſhman to the Roman: yet, with their leave, I muſt preſume to ſay, that the things they admire are only glittering trifles, and ſo far from being witty, that in a ſerious poem they are nauſeous, becauſe they are unnatural. Would any man, who is ready to die for love, deſcribe his paſſion like Narciſſus? Would he think of *inopem me copia fecit*, and a dozen more of ſuch expreſſions, poured on the neck of one another, and ſignifying all the

the ſame thing? If this were wit, was this a time to be witty, when the poor wretch was in the agony of death! This is juſt John Littlewit in Bartholomew-Fair, who had a conceit (as he tells you) left him in his miſery; a miſerable conceit. On theſe occaſions the poet ſhould endeavour to raiſe pity: but inſtead of this, Ovid is tickling you to laugh. Virgil never made uſe of ſuch machines, when he was moving you to commiſerate the death of Dido: he would not deſtroy what he was building. Chaucer makes Arcite violent in his love, and unjuſt in the purſuit of it: yet when he came to die, he made him think more reaſonably: he repents not of his love, for that had altered his character; but acknowledges the injuſtice of his proceedings, and reſigns Emilia to Palamon. What would Ovid have done on this occaſion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his death-bed. He had complained he was farther off from poſſeſſion, by being ſo near, and a thouſand ſuch boyiſms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the ſubject. They, who think otherwiſe, would by the ſame reaſon prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them. As for the turn of words, in which Ovid particularly excels all poets; they are ſometimes a fault, and ſometimes a beauty, as they are uſed properly or improperly; but in ſtrong paſſions always to be ſhunned, becauſe paſſions are ſerious, and will admit no playing. The French have a high value for them; and I confeſs, they are often what they call delicate, when they are introduced with judgment; but Chaucer writ with more ſimplicity, and followed nature more cloſely, than to uſe them. I have thus far, to the beſt of my knowledge, been an upright judge betwixt the parties in competition, not meddling with the deſign nor the

the diſpoſition of it; becauſe the deſign was not their own; and in the diſpoſing of it they were equal. It remains that I ſay ſomewhat of Chaucer in particular.

In the firſt place, as he is the father of Engliſh poetry, ſo I hold him in the ſame degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good ſenſe; learned in all ſciences; and therefore ſpeaks properly on all ſubjects: as he knew what to ſay, ſo he knows alſo when to leave off, a continence which is practiſed by few writers, and ſcarcely by any of the antients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets is ſunk in his reputation, becauſe he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but ſwept like a drag-net, great and ſmall. There was plenty enough, but the diſhes were ill-ſorted; whole pyramids of ſweet-meats, for boys and women; but little of ſolid meat, for men; all this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment; neither did he want that in diſcerning the beauties and faults of other poets; but only indulged himſelf in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reaſon, though he muſt always be thought a great poet, he is no longer eſteemed a good writer: and for ten impreſſions, which his works have had in ſo many ſucceſſive years, yet at preſent a hundred books are ſcarcely purchaſed once a twelvemonth: for, as my laſt lord Rocheſter ſaid, tho' ſomewhat profanely, Not being of God, he could not ſtand.

Chaucer followed nature every where; but was never ſo bold to go beyond her: and there is a great difference of being *Poeta* and *nimis Poeta*, if we believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modeſt behaviour and affectation. The verſe of Chaucer, I confeſs, is not

not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus iſtius temporis accommodata:* they who lived with him, and ſome time after him, thought it muſical; and it continues ſo even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries: there is the rude ſweetneſs of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleaſing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go ſo far as he who publiſhed the laſt edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten ſyllables in a verſe where we find but nine: but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is ſo groſs and obvious an error, that common ſenſe (which is a rule in every thing but matters of faith and revelation) muſt convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verſe which we call Heroic, was either not known, or not always practiſed in Chaucer's age. It were an eaſy matter to produce ſome thouſands of his verſes, which are lame for want of half a foot, and ſometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwiſe. We can only ſay, that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the firſt. We muſt be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in proceſs of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenſer, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being: and our numbers were in their nonage till theſe laſt appeared. I need ſay little of his parentage, life, and fortunes: they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad and favoured by Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth, and was poet, as I ſuppoſe, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt

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in the rebellion of the commons; and being brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry the Fourth when he had depoſed his predeceſſor. Neither is it to be admired, that Henry, who was a wiſe as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by ſucceſſion, and was ſenſible that his title was not ſound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I ſay, if that great politician ſhould be pleaſed to have the greateſt wit of thoſe times in his intereſts, and to be the trumpet of his praiſes. Auguſtus had given him the example, by the advice of Mæcenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whoſe praiſes helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to poſterity. As for the religion of our poet, he ſeems to have ſome little bias towards the opinions of Wickliff, after John of Gaunt his patron; ſomewhat of which appears in the tale of Piers Plowman: yet I cannot blame him for inveighing ſo ſharply againſt the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly intereſt, deſerved the laſhes which he gave them, both in that, and to moſt of his Canterbury tales: neither has his contemporary Boccace ſpared them. Yet both thoſe poets lived in much eſteem with good and holy men in orders: for the ſcandal which is given by particular prieſts, reflects not on the ſacred function. Chaucer's Monk, his Chanon, and his Fryer, took not from the character of his Good Parſon. A ſatyrical poet is the check of the laymen, on bad prieſts. We are only to take care, that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the ſame condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarſely uſed: for

the corruption of the beſt becomes the worſt. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is firſt taken off, by which the dignity of his order is ſecured: if he be wrongfully accuſed, he has his action of ſlander; and it is at the poet's peril, if he tranſgreſs the law. But they will tell us, that all kind of ſatire, though never ſo well deſerved by particular prieſts, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England any thing diſhonoured, when a peer ſuffers for his treaſon? If he be libelled, or any way defamed, he has his *Scandalum Magnatum* to puniſh the offender. They, who uſe this kind of argument, ſeem to be conſcious to themſelves of ſomewhat which has deſerved the poet's laſh; and are leſs concerned for their public capacity, than for their private; at leaſt there is pride at the bottom of their reaſoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themſelves, they are all in ſome ſort parties: for, ſince they ſay the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be ſure, that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to ſpeak my opinion in this caſe, I know not: but I am ſure a diſpute of this nature cauſed miſchief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbiſhop of Canterbury; one ſtanding up for the Laws of his land, and the other for the honour (as he called it) of God's Church; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majeſty from poſt to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake has ſaved me the labour of inquiring into the eſteem and reverence which the prieſts have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminiſh any part of it: yet I muſt needs ſay, that when a prieſt provokes me without any occaſion given him, I have no reaſon, unleſs it be the charity

charity of a Chriſtian, to forgive him? *Prior læſit* is juſtification ſufficient in the Civil Law. If I anſwer him in his own language, ſelf-defence, I am ſure, muſt be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a ſharp recrimination, ſomewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my reſentment has not wrought ſo far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that ſubject with ſome pleaſure, reſerving to myſelf the right, if I ſhall think fit hereafter, to deſcribe another ſort of prieſts, ſuch as are more eaſily to be found than the good parſon; ſuch as have given the laſt blow to Chriſtianity in this age, by a practice ſo contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time. In the mean while, I take up Chaucer where I left him. He muſt have been a man of a moſt wonderful comprehenſive nature, becauſe, as it has been truly obſerved of him, he has taken into the compaſs of his Canterbury tales the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole Engliſh nation, in his age. Not a ſingle character has eſcaped him. All his pilgrims are ſeverally diſtinguiſhed from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very phyſiognomies and perſons. Baptiſta Porta could not have deſcribed their natures better, than by the marks which the poet gives them. The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are ſo ſuited to their different educations, humours and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and ſerious characters are diſtinguiſhed by their ſeveral ſorts of gravity: their diſcourſes are ſuch as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; ſuch as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his perſons are vicious, and ſome virtuous; ſome are unlearned,

learned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd, and ſome are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different: the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are ſeveral men, and diſtinguiſhed from each other, as much as the mincing lady prioreſs, and the broad-ſpeaking gap-toothed wife of Bath. But enough of this: there is ſuch a variety of game ſpringing up before me, that I am diſtracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. 'Tis ſufficient to ſay, according to the proverb, that here is God's plenty. We have our fore-fathers and great grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are ſtill remaining in mankind, and even in England, tho' they are called by other names than thoſe of Monks and Friars, and Chanons, and lady Abbeſſes, and Nuns: for mankind is ever the ſame, and nothing loſt out of nature, tho' every thing is altered. May I have leave to do myſelf the juſtice, (ſince my enemies will do me none, and are ſo far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me ſo much as to be a Chriſtian, or a moral man) may I have leave, I ſay, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to ſuch tales of Chaucer as favour nothing of immodeſty. If I had deſired more to pleaſe than to inſtruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchants, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are beaux and ladies of pleaſure in the town. But I will no more offend againſt good manners: I am ſenſible, as I ought to be, of the ſcandal I have given by my looſe writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If any thing of this nature, or of profaneneſs, be crept into theſe poems, I am ſo far from defending it, that

I diſown it. *Totum hoc indictum volo.* Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad-ſpeaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them. Our countryman, in the end of his characters, before the Canterbury tales, thus excuſes the ribaldry, which is very groſs in many of his novels.

But firſt, I pray you of your courteſy,
That ye ne arrettee it nought my villany,
Though that I plainly ſpeak in this mattere
To tellen you her words, and eke her chere:
Ne though I ſpeak her words properly,
For this ye knowen as well as I,
Who ſhall tellen a tale after a man,
He mote rehearſe as nye, as ever he can:
Everich word of it been in his charge,
All ſpeke he, never ſo rudely, ne large.
Or elſe he mote tellen his tale untrue,
Or feine things, or find words new:
He may not ſpare, altho he were his brother,
He mote as well ſay o word as another.
Chriſt ſpake himſelf full broad in holy writ,
And well I wote no villany is it,
Eke Plato ſaith, who ſo can him rede,
The words mote been couſin to the dede.

Yet if a man ſhould have inquired of Boccace or of Chaucer, what need they had of introducing ſuch characters, where obſcene words were proper in their mouths, but very indecent to be heard; I know not what anſwer they could have made: for that reaſon, ſuch tale ſhall be left untold by me. You have here a ſpecimen of Chaucer's language, which is ſo obſolete, that his ſenſe is ſcarce to be underſtood; and you have likewiſe more than one example of his unequal num-

bers, which were mentioned before. Yet many of his verſes conſiſt of ten ſyllables, and the words not much behind our preſent Engliſh: as for example, theſe two lines, in the deſcription of the carpenter's young wife:

Wincing ſhe was, as is a jolly colt,
Long as a maſt, and upright as a bolt.

I have almoſt done with Chaucer, when I have anſwered ſome objections relating to my preſent work. I find ſome people are offended that I have turned theſe tales into modern Engliſh; becauſe they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-faſhioned wit, not worth reviving. I have often heard the late earl of Leiceſter ſay, that Mr. Cowley himſelf was of that opinion; who having read him over at my lord's requeſt, declared he had no taſte of him. I dare not advance my opinion againſt the judgment of ſo great an author: but I think it fair, however, to leave the deciſion to the public: Mr. Cowley was too modeſt to ſet up for a dictator; and being ſhocked perhaps with his old ſtile, never examined into the depth of his good ſenſe. Chaucer, I confeſs, is a rough diamond, and muſt firſt be poliſhed, ere he ſhines. I deny not likewiſe, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece: but ſometimes mingles trivial things with thoſe of greater moment. Sometimes alſo, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has ſaid enough. But there are more great wits beſides Chaucer, whoſe fault is their exceſs of conceits, and thoſe ill ſorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having obſerved this redundancy in Chaucer, (as it is an eaſy matter for a man

of

of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater) I have not tied myſelf to a literal tranſlation; but have often omitted what I judged unneceſſary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have preſumed farther, in ſome places, and added ſomewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true luſtre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, becauſe (if I may be permitted to ſay it of myſelf) I found I had a ſoul congenial to his, and that I had been converſant in the ſame ſtudies. Another poet, in another age, may take the ſame liberty with my writings; if at leaſt they live long enough to deſerve correction. It was alſo neceſſary ſometimes to reſtore the ſenſe of Chaucer, which was loſt or mangled in the errors of the preſs: let this example ſuffice at preſent; in the ſtory of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is deſcribed, you find theſe verſes, in all the editions of our author:

There ſaw I Danè turned into a tree,
I mean not the goddeſs Diane,
But Venus daughter, which that hight Danè:

Which after a little conſideration I knew was to be reformed into this ſenſe, that Daphne the daughter of Peneus was turned into a tree. I durſt not make thus bold with Ovid, leſt ſome future Milbourn ſhould ariſe, and ſay, I varied from my author, becauſe I underſtood him not.

But there are other judges who think I ought not to have tranſlated Chaucer into Engliſh, out of a quite contrary notion: they ſuppoſe there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is a little

leſs than profanation and ſacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that ſomewhat of his good ſenſe will ſuffer in this transfuſion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be loſt, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent perſon, whom I mentioned, the late earl of Leiceſter, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley deſpiſed him. My lord diſſuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it ſome years before his death) and his authority prevailed ſo far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reaſon was not convinced with what he urged againſt it. If the firſt end of a writer be to be underſtood, then as his language grows obſolete, his thoughts muſt grow obſcure: *multa renaſcentur quæ nunc cecidere; cadentque, quæ nunc ſunt in honore vocabula, ſi volet uſus, quem penes arbitrium eſt & jus & norma loquendi.* When an ancient word for its ſound and ſignificancy deſerves to be revived, I have that reaſonable veneration for antiquity, to reſtore it. All beyond this is ſuperſtition. Words are not like landmarks, ſo ſacred as never to be removed; cuſtoms are changed, and even ſtatutes are ſilently repealed, when the reaſon ceaſes for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, that his thoughts will loſe of their original beauty, by the innovation of words; in the firſt place, not only their beauty, but their being is loſt, where they are no longer underſtood, which is the preſent caſe. I grant that ſomething muſt be loſt in all tranſfuſion, that is, in all tranſlations; but the ſenſe will remain, which would otherwiſe be loſt, or at leaſt be maimed, when it is ſcarce intelligible; and that but to a few. How few are there who can read Chaucer, ſo as to underſtand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with

leſs

leſs profit and no pleaſure. 'Tis not for the uſe of ſome old Saxon friends, that I have taken theſe pains with him: let them neglect my verſion, becauſe they have no need of it. I made it for their ſakes who underſtand ſenſe and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and ſenſe is put into words which they underſtand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I loſe in ſome places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I may be partial to myſelf; let the reader judge, and I ſubmit to his deciſion. Yet I think I have juſt occaſion to complain of them, who, becauſe they underſtand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the ſame advantage, and hoard him up, as miſers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themſelves, and hinder others from making uſe of it. In ſum, I ſeriouſly proteſt, that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer, than myſelf. I have tranſlated ſome part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at leaſt refreſh it, amongſt my countrymen. If I have altered him any where for the better, I muſt at the ſame time acknowledge, that I could have done nothing without him: *Facile eſt inventis addere*, is no great commendation; and I am not ſo vain to think I have deſerved a greater. I will conclude what I have to ſay of him ſingly, with this one remark: a lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correſpondence with ſome authors of the fair ſex in France, has been informed by them, that Mademoiſelle de Scudery, who is as old as Sibyl, and inſpired like her by the ſame god of poetry, is at this time tranſlating Chaucer into modern French. From which I gather, that he has been formerly tranſlated into the old Provencal, (for how ſhe ſhould come to underſtand old Engliſh I know not.) But the matter

of

of fact being true, it makes me think that there is ſomething in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits ſhould be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, 'tis extraordinary, and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with ſuperſtition.

Boccace comes laſt to be conſidered, who, living in the ſame age with Chaucer, had the ſame genius, and followed the ſame ſtudies: both writ novels, and each of them cultivated his mother tongue. But the greateſt reſemblance of our two modern authors being in their familiar ſtile, and pleaſing way of relating comical adventures, I may paſs it over, becauſe I have tranſlated nothing from Boccace of that nature. In the ſerious part of poetry, the advantage is wholly on Chaucer's ſide; for tho' the Engliſhman has borrow'd many tales from the Italian, yet it appears that thoſe of Boccace were not generally of his own making but taken from authors of former ages, and by him only modelled: ſo that what there was of invention in either of them, may be judged equal. But Chaucer has refined on Boccace, and has mended the ſtories which he has borrowed, in his way of telling; though proſe allows more liberty of thought, and the expreſſion is more eaſy, when unconfined by numbers. Our countryman carries weight, and yet wins the race at diſadvantage. I deſire not the reader ſhould take my word: and therefore I will ſet two of their diſcourſes on the ſame ſubject, in the ſame light, for every man to judge betwixt them. I tranſlated Chaucer firſt, and, amongſt the reſt, pitched on the wife of Bath's tale; not daring, as I have ſaid, to adventure on her prologue, becauſe it is too licentious: there Chaucer introduces an old woman of mean parentage, whom a youthful

youthful knight of noble blood was forced to marry, and conſequently loathed her: the crone being in bed with him on the wedding-night, and finding his averſion, endeavours to win his affection by reaſon, and ſpeaks a good word for herſelf, (as who could blame her?) in hope to mollify the ſullen bridegroom. She takes her topicks from the benefits of poverty, the advantages of old age and uglineſs, the vanity of youth, and the ſilly pride of anceſtry and titles without inherent virtue, which is the true nobility. When I had cloſed Chaucer, I returned to Ovid, and tranſlated ſome more of his fables; and by this time had ſo far forgotten the wife of Bath's tale, that, when I took up Boccace, unawares I fell on the ſame argument of preferring virtue to nobility of blood, and titles, in the ſtory of Sigiſmunda; which I had certainly avoided for the reſemblance of the two diſcourſes, if my memory had not failed me. Let the reader weigh them both; and if he thinks me partial to Chaucer, it is in him to right Boccace.

I prefer in our countryman, far above all his other ſtories, the noble Poem of Palamon and Arcite, which is of the Epic kind, and perhaps not much inferior to the Ilias or the Æneis: the ſtory is more pleaſing than either of them, the manners as perfect, the diction as poetical, the learning as deep and various; and the diſpoſition full as artful; only it includes a greater length of time, as taking up ſeven years at leaſt; but Ariſtotle has left undecided the duration of the action; which yet is eaſily reduced into the compaſs of a year, by a narration of what preceded the return of Palamon to Athens. I had thought for the honour of our nation, and more particularly for his, whoſe laurel, tho' unworthy, I have worn after him, that this ſtory was of Engliſh growth, and Chaucer's own:

own: but I was undeceived by Boccace; for caſually looking on the end of his ſeventh Giornata, I found Dioneo (under which name he ſhadows himſelf) and Fiametta (who repreſents his miſtreſs the natural daughter of Robert king of Naples) of whom theſe words are ſpoken, *Dioneo e la Fiametta granpezza contarono inſieme d' Arcita, e di Palamone:* by which it appears that this ſtory was written before the time of Boccace; but the name of its author being wholly loſt, Chaucer is now become an original; and I queſtion not but the poem has received many beauties by paſſing through his noble hands. Beſides this tale, there is another of his own invention, after the manner of the Provencals, call'd The Flower and the Leaf; with which I was ſo particularly pleaſed, both for the invention and the moral, that I cannot hinder myſelf from recommending it to the reader.

As a corollary to this preface, in which I have done juſtice to others, I owe ſomewhat to myſelf: not that I think it worth my time to enter the liſts with one Milbourn, and one Blackmore, but barely to take notice, that ſuch men there are who have written ſcurrilouſly againſt me, without any provocation. Milbourn, who is in Orders, pretends amongſt the reſt this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on prieſthood: If I have, I am only to aſk pardon of good prieſts, and am afraid his part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be ſatisfied that he ſhall not be able to force himſelf upon me for an adverſary. I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own tranſlations of Virgil have anſwered his criticiſms on mine. If (as they ſay, he has declared in print) he prefers the verſion of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the ſame compliment: for it is agreed on all hands, that

that he writes even below Ogilby: that, you will ſay, is not eaſily to be done; but what cannot Milbourn bring about? I am ſatisfied however, that while he and I live together, I ſhall not be thought the worſt poet of the age. It looks as if I had deſired him underhand to write ſo ill againſt me: but upon my honeſt word I have not bribed him to do me this ſervice, and am wholly guiltleſs of his pamphlet. 'Tis true, I ſhould be glad, if I could perſuade him to continue his good offices, and write ſuch another critick on any thing of mine: for I find by experience he has a great ſtroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken ſome pains with my poetry; but no body will be perſuaded to take the ſame with his. If I had taken to the church (as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts) I ſhould have had more ſenſe, if not more grace, than to have turned myſelf out of my benefice by writing libels on my pariſhioners. But his account of my manners and my principles, are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry: and ſo I have done with him for ever.

As for the City Bard, or Knight Phyſician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of Abſalom and Achitophel, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, becauſe nothing ill is to be ſpoken of the dead: and therefore peace be to the Manes of his Arthurs. I will only ſay, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an Epic poem on king Arthur, in my preface to the tranſlation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected

them, as Dares did the whirlbats of Eryx, when they were thrown before him by Entellus. Yet from that preface he plainly took his hint: for he began immediately upon the ſtory; tho' he had the baſeneſs not to acknowledge his benefactor; but inſtead of it, to traduce me in a libel.

I ſhall ſay the leſs of Mr. Collier, becauſe in many things he has taxed me juſtly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expreſſions of mine, which can be truly argued of obſcenity, profaneneſs, or immorality; and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no perſonal occaſion to be otherwiſe, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cauſe, when I have ſo often drawn it for a good one. Yet it were not difficult to prove, that in many places he has perverted my meaning by his gloſſes; and interpreted my words into blaſphemy and baudry, of which they were not guilty; beſides that he is too much given to horſe-play in his raillery; and comes to battle like a dictator from the plough. I will not ſay, The zeal of God's houſe has eaten him up; but I am ſure it has devoured ſome part of his good-manners and civility. It might alſo be doubted whether it were altogether zeal, which prompted him to this rough manner of proceeding; perhaps it became not one of his function to rake into the rubbiſh of ancient and modern plays; a divine might have employed his pains to better purpoſe, than in the naſtineſs of Plautus and Ariſtophanes; whoſe examples, as they excuſe not me, ſo it might be poſſibly ſuppoſed, that he read them not without ſome pleaſure. They who have written commentaries on thoſe poets, or on Horace, Juvenal, and Martial, have explained ſome vices,

rices, which without their interpretation had been unknown to modern times. Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the former age and us.

There is more baudry in one Play of Fletcher's call'd The Cuſtom of the Country, than in all ours together. Yet this has been often acted on the ſtage in my remembrance. Are the times ſo much more reformed now, than they were five and twenty years ago? If they are, I congratulate the amendment of our morals. But I am not to prejudice the cauſe of my fellow-poets, tho' I abandon my own defence: they have ſome of them anſwered for themſelves, and neither they nor I can think Mr. Collier ſo formidable an enemy, that we ſhould ſhun him. He has loſt ground at the latter end of the day, by purſuing his point too far, like the prince of Conde at the battle of Senneph: from immoral plays, to no plays; *ab abuſu ad uſum, non valet conſequentia.* But being a party, I am not to erect myſelf into a judge. As for the reſt of thoſe who have written againſt me, they are ſuch ſcoundrels, that they deſerve not the leaſt notice to be taken of them. Blackmore and Milbourn are only diſtinguiſhed from the crowd, by being remembered to their infamy.

——— *Demetri, Teque Tigelli*
Diſcipulorum inter jubeo plorare cathedras.

TALES

TALES

FROM

CHAUCER.

To her GRACE the

DUTCHESS OF ORMOND.

With the following POEM of

PALAMON AND ARCITE.

MADAM,

THE bard who firſt adorn'd our native tongue,
T'un'd to his Britiſh lyre this ancient ſong:
Which Homer might without a bluſh rehearſe,
And leaves a doubtful palm in Virgil's verſe:
He match'd their beauties, where they moſt excel;
Of love ſung better, and of arms as well.
Vouchſafe, illuſtrious Ormond, to behold
What power the charms of beauty had of old;
Nor wonder if ſuch deeds of arms were done,
Inſpir'd by two fair eyes that ſparkled like your own.
If Chaucer by the beſt idea wrought,
And poets can divine each other's thought,
The faireſt nymph before his eyes he ſet;
And then the faireſt was Plantagenet;
Who three contending princes made their prize,
And rul'd the rival nations with her eyes:
Who left immortal trophies of her fame,
And to the nobleſt order gave the name.
Like her, of equal kindred to the throne,
You keep her conqueſts, and extend your own:
As when the ſtars in their etherial race,
At length have roll'd around the liquid ſpace,
At certain periods they reſume their place,

From the ſame point of heaven their courſe advance,
And move in meaſures of their former dance;
Thus, after length of ages, ſhe returns,
Reſtor'd in you, and the ſame place adorns;
Or you perform her office in the ſphere,
Born of her blood, and make a new platonic year.
O true Plantagenet, O race divine,
(For beauty ſtill is fatal to the line,)
Had Chaucer liv'd that angel-face to view,
Sure he had drawn his Emily from you;
Or had you liv'd to judge the doubtful right,
Your noble Palamon had been the knight;
And conqu'ring Theſeus from his ſide had ſent
Your gen'rous lord, to guide the Theban government.
Time ſhall accompliſh that; and I ſhall ſee
A Palamon in him, in you an Emily.
Already have the fates your path prepar'd,
And ſure preſage your future ſway declar'd:
When weſtward, like the ſun, you took your way,
And from benighted Britain bore the day,
Blue Triton gave the ſignal from the ſhore,
The ready Nereids heard, and ſwam before
To ſmooth the ſeas; a ſoft Eteſian gale
But juſt inſpir'd, and gently ſwell'd the ſail;
Portunus took his turn, whoſe ample hand
Heav'd up his lighten'd keel, and ſunk the ſand,
And ſteer'd the ſacred veſſel ſafe to land.
The land, if not reſtrain'd, had met your way,
Projected out a neck, and jutted to the ſea.
Hibernia, proſtrate at your feet, ador'd
In you, the pledge of her expected lord;
Due to her iſle; a venerable name;
His father and his grandſire known to fame;
Aw'd by that houſe, accuſtom'd to command,
The ſturdy Kerns in due ſubjection ſtand;
Nor bear the reins in any foreign hand.

At

At your approach, they crouded to the port;
And ſcarcely landed, you create a court:
As Ormond's harbinger, to you they run;
For Venus is the promiſe of the ſun.
The waſte of civil wars, their towns deſtroy'd,
Pales unhonor'd, Ceres unemploy'd,
Were all forgot; and one triumphant day
Wip'd all the tears of three campaigns away.
Blood rapines, maſſacres, were cheaply bought,
So mighty recompence your beauty brought.
As when the dove returning bore the mark
Of earth reſtor'd to the long lab'ring ark,
The relics of mankind, ſecure of reſt,
Op'd ev'ry window to receive the gueſt,
And the fair bearer of the meſſage bleſs'd;
So, when you came, with loud repeated cries,
The nation took an omen from your eyes,
And God advanc'd his rainbow in the ſkies,
To ſign inviolable peace reſtor'd;
The ſaints with ſolemn ſhouts proclaim'd the new accord.
When at your ſecond coming you appear,
(For I foretel that millenary year)
The ſharpen'd ſhare ſhall vex the ſoil no more,
But earth unbidden ſhall produce her ſtore;
The land ſhall laugh, the circling ocean ſmile,
And heav'n's indulgence bleſs the holy iſle.
Heav'n from all ages has reſerv'd for you
That happy clime, which venom never new;
Or if it had been there, your eyes alone
Have power to chaſe all poiſon, but their own.
Now in this interval, which fate has caſt
Betwixt your future glories, and your paſt,
This pauſe of pow'r, 'tis Ireland's hour to mourn;
While England celebrates your ſafe return,
By which you ſeem the ſeaſons to command,
And bring our ſummers back to their forſaken land.

The vanquiſh'd iſle our leiſure muſt attend,
Till the fair bleſſing we vouchſafe to ſend;
Nor can we ſpare you long, tho' often we may lend.
The dove was twice employ'd abroad, before
The world was dry'd, and ſhe return'd no more.
Nor dare we truſt ſo ſoft a meſſenger,
New from her ſickneſs, to that northern air;
Reſt here a while your luſtre to reſtore,
That they may ſee you, as you ſhone before;
For yet, th' eclipſe not wholly paſt, you wade
Thro' ſome remains, and dimneſs of a ſhade.
A ſubject in his prince may claim a right,
Nor ſuffer him with ſtrength impair'd to fight;
Till force returns, his ardor we reſtrain,
And curb his warlike wiſh to croſs the main.
Now paſt the danger, let the learn'd begin
Th' inquiry, where diſeaſe could enter in;
How thoſe malignant atoms forc'd their way,
What in their faultleſs frame they found to make their prey?
Where ev'ry element was weigh'd ſo well,
That heav'n alone, who mix'd the maſs, cou'd tell
Which of the four ingredients could rebel;
And where, impriſon'd in ſo ſweet a cage,
A ſoul might well be pleas'd to paſs an age.
And yet the fine materials made it weak:
Porcelain, by being pure, is apt to break:
Ev'n to your breaſt the ſickneſs durſt aſpire;
And, forc'd from that fair temple to retire,
Profanely ſet the holy place on fire.
In vain your lord like young Veſpaſian mourn'd,
When the fierce flames the ſanctuary burn'd:
And I prepar'd to pay in verſes rude
A moſt deteſted act of gratitude:
Ev'n this had been your elegy, which now
Is offer'd for your health, the table of my vow.

Your

Your angel ſure our Morley's mind inſpir'd,
To find the remedy your ill requir'd;
As once the Macedon, by Jove's decree,
Was taught to dream an herb for Ptolomee:
Or heav'n, which had ſuch over-coſt beſtow'd,
As ſcarce it could afford to fleſh and blood,
So lik'd the frame, he would not work anew,
To ſave the charges of another you,
Or by his middle ſcience did he ſteer,
And ſaw ſome great contingent good appear
Well worth a miracle to keep you here:
And for that end, preſerv'd the precious mould,
Which all the future Ormonds was to hold;
And meditated in his better mind
An heir from you, which may redeem the failing kind.

Bleſt be the pow'r which has at once reſtor'd
The hopes of loſt ſucceſſion to your lord,
Joy to the firſt and laſt of each degree,
Virtue to courts, and, what I long'd to ſee,
To you the Graces, and the Muſe to me.
O daughter of the roſe, whoſe cheeks unite
The diff'ring titles of the red and white;
Who heav'n's alternate beauty well diſplay,
The bluſh of morning and the milky way;
Whoſe face is paradiſe, but fenc'd from ſin:
For God in either eye has plac'd a cherubin.

All is your lord's alone; ev'n abſent, he
Employs the care of chaſte Penelope.
For him you waſte in tears your widow'd hours,
For him your curious needle paints the flowers;
Such works of old Imperial dames were taught;
Such, for Aſcanius, fair Eliza wrought.
The ſoft receſſes of your hours improve
The three fair pledges of your happy love:

All other parts of pious duty done,
You owe your Ormond nothing but a son;
To fill in future times his father's place,
And wear the garter of his mother's race.

PALAMON

PALAMON AND ARCITE:

OR, THE

KNIGHT's TALE.

BOOK I.

IN days of old, there liv'd, of mighty fame,
A valiant prince, and Theſeus was his name:
A chief, who more in feats of arms excell'd,
The riſing nor the ſetting ſun beheld.
Of Athens he was lord; much land he won,
And added foreign countries to his crown.

In

In Scythia with the warrior queen he ſtrove,
Whom firſt by force he conquer'd, then by love;
He brought in triumph back the beauteous dame,
With whom her ſiſter, fair Emilia, came.
With honour to his home let Theſeus ride,
With love to friend, and fortune for his guide,
And his victorious army at his ſide.
I paſs their warlike pomp, their proud array,
Their ſhouts, their ſongs, their welcome on the way:
But, were it not too long, I would recite
The feats of Amazons, the fatal fight
Betwixt the hardy queen, and heroe knight;
The town beſieg'd, and how much blood it coſt
The female army, and th' Athenian hoſt;
The ſpouſals of Hippolita the queen;
What tilts and turneys at the feaſt were ſeen;
The ſtorm at their return, the ladies fear:
But theſe, and other things, I muſt forbear.
The field is ſpacious I deſign to ſow,
With oxen far unfit to draw the plow:
The remnant of my tale is of a length
To tire your patience, and to waſte my ſtrength;
And trivial accidents ſhall be forborn,
That others may have time to take their turn;
As was at firſt enjoin'd us by mine hoſt:
That he whoſe tale is beſt, and pleaſes moſt,
Should win his ſupper at our common coſt.
And therefore where I left, I will purſue
This ancient ſtory, whether falſe or true,
In hope it may be mended with a new.
The prince I mention'd, full of high renown,
In this array drew near th' Athenian town;
When in his pomp and utmoſt of his pride,
Marching he chanc'd to caſt his eye aſide,
And ſaw a choir of mourning dames, who lay
By two and two acroſs the common way:

At

At his approach they rais'd a rueful cry,
And beat their breasts, and held their hands on high,
Creeping and crying, till they seiz'd at last
His courser's bridle, and his feet embrac'd.
Tell me, said Theseus, what and whence you are,
And why this funeral pageant you prepare?
Is this the welcome of my worthy deeds,
To meet my triumph in ill-omen'd weeds?
Or envy you my praise, and would destroy
With grief my pleasures, and pollute my joy?
Or are you injur'd, and demand relief?
Name your request, and I will ease your grief.
The most in years of all the mourning train
Began; (but swooned first away for pain)
Then scarce recover'd spoke: nor envy we
Thy great renown, nor grudge thy victory;
'Tis thine, O king, th' afflicted to redress,
And fame has fill'd the world with thy success:
We wretched women sue for that alone,
Which of thy goodness is refus'd to none;
Let fall some drops of pity on our grief,
If what we beg be just, and we deserve relief:
For none of us, who now thy grace implore,
But held the rank of sovereign queen before;
Till thanks to giddy chance, which never bears,
That mortal bliss should last for length of years,
She cast us headlong from our high estate,
And here in hope of thy return we wait:
And long have waited in the temple nigh,
Built to the gracious goddess Clemency.
But rev'rence thou the pow'r whose name it bears,
Relieve th' oppress'd, and wipe the widow's tears.
I, wretched I, have other fortune seen,
The wife of Capaneus, and once a queen:
At Thebes he fell; curst be the fatal day!
And all the rest thou seest in this array,

To

To make their moan, their lords in battle loſt
Before that town beſieg'd by our confed'rate hoſt:
But Creon, old and impious, who commands
The Theban city, and uſurps the lands,
Denies the rites of fun'ral fires to thoſe
Whoſe breathleſs bodies yet he calls his foes.
Unburn'd, unbury'd, on a heap they lie;
Such is their fate, and ſuch his tyranny;
No friend has leave to bear away the dead,
But with their lifeleſs limbs his hounds are fed:
At this ſhe ſhriek'd aloud; the mournful train
Echo'd her grief, and grov'ling on the plain,
With groans, and hands upheld, to move his mind,
Beſought his pity to their helpleſs kind!
The prince was touch'd, his tears began to flow,
And, as his tender heart would break in two,
He ſigh'd; and could not but their fate deplore,
So wretched now, ſo fortunate before.
Then lightly from his lofty ſteed he flew,
And raiſing one by one the ſuppliant crew,
To comfort each, full ſolemnly he ſwore,
That by the faith which knights to knighthood bore,
And what e'er elſe to chivalry belongs,
He would not ceaſe, till he reveng'd their wrongs:
That Greece ſhould ſee perform'd what he declar'd;
And cruel Creon find his juſt reward.
He ſaid no more, but, ſhunning all delay,
Rode on; nor enter'd Athens on his way:
But left his ſiſter and his queen behind,
And wav'd his royal banner in the wind:
Where in an argent field the god of war
Was drawn triumphant on his iron car;
Red was his ſword, and ſhield, and whole attire,
And all the godhead ſeem'd to glow with fire;
Ev'n the ground glitter'd where the ſtandard flew,
And the green graſs was dy'd to ſanguine hue.

High

High on his pointed lance his pennon bore
His Cretan fight, the conquer'd Minotaure:
The ſoldiers ſhout around with gen'rous rage,
And in that victory their own preſage.
He prais'd their ardor: inly pleas'd to ſee
His hoſt the flow'r of Grecian chivalry.
All day he march'd; and all th' enſuing night;
And ſaw the city with returning light.
The proceſs of the war I need not tell,
How Theſeus conquer'd, and how Creon fell:
Or after, how by ſtorm the walls were won,
Or how the victor ſack'd and burn'd the town:
How to the ladies he reſtor'd again
The bodies of their lords in battle ſlain:
And with what ancient rites they were interr'd;
All theſe to fitter times ſhall be deferr'd:
I ſpare the widows tears, their woful cries,
And howling at their huſband's obſequies;
How Theſeus at theſe fun'rals did aſſiſt,
And with what gifts the mourning dames diſmiſs'd.
Thus when the victor chief had Creon ſlain,
And conquer'd Thebes, he pitched upon the plain
His mighty camp, and, when the day return'd,
The country waſted, and the hamlets burn'd,
And left the pillagers, to rapine bred,
Without controul to ſtrip and ſpoil the dead.
There, in a heap of ſlain among the reſt
Two youthful knights they found beneath a load oppreſs'd
Of ſlaughter'd foes, whom firſt to death they ſent
The trophies of their ſtrength, a bloody monument.
Both fair, and both of royal blood they ſeem'd,
Whom kinſmen to the crown the heralds deem'd;
That day in equal arms they fought for fame;
Their ſwords, their ſhields, their ſurcoats were the ſame.
Cloſe by each other laid they preſs'd the ground,
Their manly boſoms pierc'd with many a grieſly wound;

Not

Nor well alive; nor wholly dead they were;
But ſome faint ſigns of feeble life appear:
The wandring breath was on the wing to part,
Weak was the pulſe, and hardly heav'd the heart.
Theſe two were ſiſter's ſons; and Arcite one,
Much fam'd in fields, with valiant Palamon.
From theſe their coſtly arms the ſpoilers rent,
And ſoftly both convey'd to Theſeus' tent:
Whom known of Creon's line, and cur'd with care,
He to his city ſent as priſoners of the war,
Hopeleſs of ranſom, and condemn'd to lie
In durance, doom'd a lingring death to die.
This done, he march'd away with warlike ſound,
And to his Athens turn'd with laurels crown'd,
Where happy long he liv'd, much lov'd, and more renown'd.
But in a tow'r, and never to be loos'd,
The woeful captive kinſmen are inclos'd:
Thus year by year they paſs, and day by day,
Till once, 'twas on the morn of chearful May,
The young Emilia fairer to be ſeen
Than the fair lily on the flowry green,
More freſh than May herſelf in bloſſoms new,
For with the roſy color ſtrove her hue,
Wak'd, as her cuſtom was, before the day,
To do th' obſervance due to ſprightly May:
For ſprightly May commands our youth to keep
The vigils of her night, and breaks their ſluggard ſleep;
Each gentle breaſt with kindly warmth ſhe moves;
Inſpires new flames, revives extinguiſh'd loves.
In this remembrance Emily ere day
Aroſe, and dreſs'd herſelf in rich array;
Freſh as the month, and as the morning fair:
Adown her ſhoulders fell her length of hair:
A ribband did the braided treſſes bind,
The reſt was looſe, and wanton'd in the wind:

Aurora

Aurora had but newly chas'd the night,
And purpled o'er the ſky with bluſhing light,
When to the garden walk ſhe took her way,
To ſport and trip along in cool of day,
And offer maiden vows in honor of the May.

At ev'ry turn, ſhe made a little ſtand,
And thruſt among the thorns her lily hand
To draw the roſe, and ev'ry roſe ſhe drew
She ſhook the ſtalk, and bruſh'd away the dew:
Then party-color'd flow'rs of white and red
She wove, to make a garland for her head:
This done, ſhe ſung and caroll'd out ſo clear,
That men and angels might rejoice to hear:
Ev'n wond'ring Philomel forgot to ſing;
And learn'd from her to welcome in the ſpring.
The tow'r, of which before was mention made,
Within whoſe keep the captive knights were laid,
Built of a large extent, and ſtrong withal,
Was one partition of the palace wall:
The garden was inclos'd within the ſquare,
Where young Emilia took the morning-air.

It happen'd Palamon the pris'ner knight,
Reſtleſs for woe, aroſe before the light,
And with his jailor's leave deſir'd to breathe
An air more wholſome than the damps beneath.
This granted, to the tower he took his way,
Chear'd with the promiſe of a glorious day:
Then caſt a languiſhing regard around,
And ſaw with hateful eyes the temples crown'd
With golden ſpires, and all the hoſtile ground.
He ſigh'd, and turn'd his eyes, becauſe he knew
'Twas but a larger jail he had in view:
Then look'd below, and from the caſtle's height
Beheld a nearer and more pleaſing ſight:
The garden, which before he had not ſeen,
In ſpring's new livery clad of white and green,
Freſh flow'rs in wide parterres, and ſhady walks between.

This view'd, but not enjoy'd, with arms acroſs
He ſtood, reflecting on his country's loſs;
Himſelf an object of the public ſcorn,
And often wiſh'd he never had been born.
At laſt, for ſo his deſtiny requir'd,
With walking giddy, and with thinking tir'd,
He thro' a little window caſt his ſight,
Tho' thick of bars, that gave a ſcanty light:
But ev'n that glimmering ſerv'd him to deſcry
Th' inevitable charms of Emily.
Scarce had he ſeen, but ſeiz'd with ſudden ſmart,
Stung to the quick, he felt it at his heart;
Struck blind with over-pow'ring light he ſtood,
Then ſtarted back amaz'd, and cry'd aloud.
Young Arcite heard; and up he ran with haſte,
To help his friend, and in his arms embrac'd;
And aſk'd him why he look'd ſo deadly wan,
And whence and how his change of cheer began?
Or who had done th' offence? But if, ſaid he,
Your grief alone is hard captivity;
For love of heav'n with patience undergo
A cureleſs ill, ſince fate will have it ſo:
So ſtood our horoſcope in chains to lie,
And Saturn in the dungeon of the ſky,
Or other baleful aſpect, rul'd our birth,
When all the friendly ſtars were under earth:
Whate'er betides, by deſtiny 'tis done;
And better bear like men, than vainly ſeek to ſhun
Nor of my bonds, ſaid Palamon again,
Nor of unhappy planets I complain;
But when my mortal anguiſh caus'd my cry,
That moment I was hurt through either eye;
Pierc'd with a random ſhaft, I faint away,
And periſh with inſenſible decay:
A glance of ſome new goddeſs gave the wound,
Whom, like Acteon, unaware I found.

Look

Look how ſhe walks along yon ſhady ſpace,
Not Juno moves with more majeſtic grace;
And all the Cyprian queen is in her face.
If thou art Venus, for thy charms confeſs
That face was form'd in heav'n, nor art thou leſs;
Diſguis'd in habit, undiſguis'd in ſhape,
O help us captives from our chains to 'ſcape;
But if our doom be paſt in bonds to lie
For life, and in a loathſome dungeon die,
Then be thy wrath appeas'd with our diſgrace,
And ſhew compaſſion to the Theban race,
Oppreſs'd by tyrant power! While yet he ſpoke,
Arcite on Emily had fix'd his look;
The fatal dart a ready paſſage found,
And deep within his heart infix'd the wound:
So that if Palamon were wounded ſore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more:
Then from his inmoſt ſoul he ſigh'd, and ſaid,
The beauty I behold has ſtruck me dead:
Unknowingly ſhe ſtrikes; and kills by chance;
Poiſon is in her eyes, and death in ev'ry glance.
O, I muſt aſk; nor aſk alone, but move
Her mind to mercy, or muſt die for love.
Thus Arcite: and thus Palamon replies,
(Eager his tone, and ardent were his eyes.)
Speak'ſt thou in earneſt, or in jeſting vein?
Jeſting, ſaid Arcite, ſuits but ill with pain.
It ſuits far worſe, (ſaid Palamon again,
And bent his brows) with men who honor weigh,
Their faith to break, their friendſhip to betray;
But worſt with thee, of noble lineage born,
My kinſman, and in arms my brother ſworn.
Have we not plighted each our holy oath,
That one ſhould be the common good of both;
One ſoul ſhould both inſpire, and neither prove
His fellow's hindrance in purſuit of love?

To this before the Gods we gave our hands,
And nothing but our death can break the bands.
This binds thee, then, to further my design:
As I am bound by vow to further thine:
Nor can'ſt, nor dar'ſt thou, traitor, on the plain
Appeach my honor, or thine own maintain,
Since thou art of my council, and the friend
Whoſe faith I truſt, and on whoſe care depend:
And wou'd'ſt thou court my lady's love, which I
Much rather than releaſe would chooſe to die?
But thou falſe Arcite never ſhall obtain
Thy bad pretence; I told thee firſt my pain:
For firſt my love began ere thine was born;
Thou as my council, and my brother ſworn,
Art bound t' aſſiſt my elderſhip of right:
Or juſtly to be deem'd a perjur'd knight.
Thus Palamon: but Arcite with diſdain
In haughty language thus reply'd again;
Forſworn thyſelf: the traitor's odious name
I firſt return, and then diſprove thy claim.
If love be paſſion, and that paſſion nurſt
With ſtrong deſires, I lov'd the lady firſt.
Can'ſt thou pretend deſire, whom zeal inflam'd
To worſhip, and a pow'r celeſtial nam'd?
Thine was devotion to the bleſt above,
I ſaw the woman and deſir'd her love;
Firſt own'd my paſſion, and to thee commend
Th' important ſecret, as my choſen friend,
Suppoſe (which yet I grant not) thy deſire
A moment elder than my rival fire;
Can chance of ſeeing firſt thy title prove?
And know'ſt thou not, no law is made for love;
Law is to things which to free choice relate;
Love is not in our choice, but in our fate;
Laws are but poſitive; love's pow'r, we ſee,
Is Nature's ſanction, and her firſt decree.

Each

Each day we break the bond of human laws
For love, and vindicate the common cauſe.
Laws for defence of civil rights are plac'd,
Love throws the fences down, and makes a general waſte;
Maids, widows, wives, without diſtinction fall;
The ſweeping deluge, love, comes on, and covers all.
If then the laws of friendſhip I tranſgreſs,
I keep the greater, while I break the leſs;
And both are mad alike, ſince neither can poſſeſs.
Both hopeleſs to be ranſom'd, never more
To ſee the ſun, but as he paſſes o'er.
Like Æſop's hounds contending for the bone,
Each pleaded right, and wou'd be lord alone;
The fruitleſs fight continued all the day;
A cur came by, and ſnatch'd the prize away.
As courtiers therefore juſtle for a grant,
And when they break their friendſhip plead their want,
So thou, if fortune will thy ſuit advance,
Love on, nor envy me my equal chance:
For I muſt love, and am reſolv'd to try
My fate, or failing in th' adventure die.
Great was their ſtrife, which hourly was renew'd,
Till each with mortal hate his rival view'd:
Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand;
But when they met, they made a ſurly ſtand;
And glar'd like angry lions as they paſs'd,
And wiſh'd that ev'ry look might be their laſt.
It chanc'd at length, Pirithous came t' attend
This worthy Theſeus, his familiar friend;
Their love in early infancy began,
And roſe as childhood ripen'd into man,
Companions of the war; and lov'd ſo well,
That when one dy'd, as ancient ſtories tell,
His fellow to redeem him went to hell.
But to purſue my tale; to welcome home
His warlike brother is Pirithous come:

Arcite of Thebes was known in arms long ſince,
And honor'd by this young Theſſalian prince.
Theſeus to gratify his friend and gueſt,
Who made our Arcite's freedom his requeſt,
Reſtor'd to liberty the captive knight,
But on theſe hard conditions I recite:
That if hereafter Arcite ſhould be found
Within the compaſs of Athenian ground,
By day or night, or on whate'er pretence,
His head ſhou'd pay the forfeit of th' offence.
To this Pirithous for his friend agreed,
And on his promiſe was the priſoner freed.
Unpleas'd and penſive hence he takes his way,
At his own peril; for his life muſt pay.
Who now but Arcite mourns his bitter fate,
Finds his dear purchaſe, and repents too late?
What have I gain'd, he ſaid, in priſon pent,
If I but change my bonds for baniſhment?
And baniſh'd from her ſight, I ſuffer more
In freedom, than I felt in bonds before;
Forc'd from her preſence, and condemn'd to live:
Unwelcome freedom, and unthank'd reprieve:
Heaven is not, but where Emily abides,
And where's ſhe's abſent, all is hell beſides.
Next to my day of birth, was that accurſt,
Which bound my friendſhip to Pirithous firſt:
Had I not known that prince, I ſtill had been
In bondage, and had ſtill Emilia ſeen:
For tho' I never can her grace deſerve,
'Tis recompence enough to ſee and ſerve.
O Palamon, my kinſman and my friend,
How much more happy fates thy love attend!
Thine is th' adventure; thine the victory:
Well has thy fortune turn'd the dice for thee:
Thou on that angel's face may'ſt feed thine eyes,
In priſon, no; but bliſsful paradiſe!

Thou

Thou daily ſeeſt that ſun of beauty ſhine,
And lov'ſt at leaſt in love's extremeſt line.
I mourn in abſence, love's eternal night;
And who can tell but ſince thou haſt her ſight,
And art a comely, young, and valiant knight,
Fortune (a various pow'r) may ceaſe to frown,
And by ſome ways unknown thy wiſhes crown?
But I, the moſt forlorn of human kind,
Nor help can hope, nor remedy can find;
But doom'd to drag my loathſom life in care,
For my reward, muſt end it in deſpair.
Fire, water, air, and earth, and force of fates
That governs all, and heav'n that all creates,
Nor art, nor nature's hand can eaſe my grief;
Nothing but death, the wretch's laſt relief:
Then farewel youth, and all the joys that dwell,
With youth and life, and life itſelf farewel.
But why, alas! do mortal men in vain
Of fortune, fate, or Providence complain?
God gives us what he knows our wants require,
And better things than thoſe which we deſire:
Some pray for riches; riches they obtain;
But, watch'd by robbers, for their wealth are ſlain:
Some pray from priſon to be freed; and come,
When guilty of their vows to fall at home;
Murder'd by thoſe they truſted with their life,
A favor'd ſervant, or a boſom wife.
Such dear-bought bleſſings happen ev'ry day,
Becauſe we know not for what things to pray.
Like drunken ſots about the ſtreet we roam:
Well knows the ſot he has a certain home;
Yet knows not how to find th' uncertain place,
And blunders on, and ſtaggers ev'ry pace.
Thus all ſeek happineſs; but few can find,
For far the greater part of men are blind.

This is my caſe, who thought our utmoſt good
Was in one word of freedom underſtood:
The fatal bleſſing came: from priſon free,
I ſtarve abroad, and loſe the ſight of Emily.
Thus Arcite; but if Arcite thus deplore
His ſuff'rings, Palamon yet ſuffers more.
For when he knew his rival freed and gone,
He ſwells with wrath; he makes outrageous moan:
He frets, he fumes, he ſtares, he ſtamps the ground;
The hollow tow'r with clamours rings around:
With briny tears he bathed his fetter'd feet,
And dropp'd all o'er with agony of ſweat.
Alas! he cry'd! I wretch in priſon pine,
Too happy rival, while the fruit is thine:
Thou liv'ſt at large, thou draw'ſt thy native air,
Pleas'd with thy freedom, proud of my deſpair:
Thou mayſt, ſince thou haſt youth and courage join'd,
A ſweet behaviour and a ſolid mind,
Aſſemble ours, and all the Theban race,
To vindicate on Athens thy diſgrace;
And after, by ſome treaty made, poſſeſs
Fair Emily, the pledge of laſting peace.
So thine ſhall be the beauteous prize, while I
Muſt languiſh in deſpair, in priſon die.
Thus all th' advantage of the ſtrife is thine,
Thy portion double joys, and double ſorrows mine.
The rage of jealouſy then fir'd his ſoul,
And his face kindled like a burning coal:
Now cold deſpair, ſucceeding in her ſtead,
To livid paleneſs turns the glowing red.
His blood, ſcarce liquid, creeps within his veins,
Like water which the freezing wind conſtrains.
Then thus he ſaid: Eternal Deities,
Who rule the world with abſolute decrees,
And write whatever time ſhall bring to paſs,
With pens of adamant, on plates of braſs;

What,

What, is the race of human kind your care
Beyond what all his fellow-creatures are?
He with the reſt is liable to pain,
And like the ſheep, his brother-beaſt, is ſlain.
Cold, hunger, priſons, ills without a cure,
All theſe he muſt, and guiltleſs oft endure;
Or does your juſtice, pow'r, or preſcience fail;
When the good ſuffer, and the bad prevail?
What worſe to wretched virtue could befal,
If fate or giddy fortune govern'd all?
Nay, worſe than other beaſts is our eſtate;
Them, to purſue their pleaſures, you create;
We, bound by harder laws, muſt curb our will,
And your commands, not our deſires, fulfil;
Then when the creature is unjuſtly ſlain,
Yet after death at leaſt he feels no pain;
But man in life ſurcharg'd with woe before,
Not freed when dead, is doom'd to ſuffer more.
A ſerpent ſhoots his ſting at unaware;
An ambuſh'd thief forelays a traveller:
The man lies murder'd, while the thief and ſnake,
One gains the thickets, and one thrids the brake.
This let divines decide; but well I know,
Juſt, or unjuſt, I have my ſhare of woe,
Through Saturn ſeated in a luckleſs place,
And Juno's wrath, that perſecutes my race;
Or Mars and Venus, in a quartil, move
My pangs of jealouſy for Arcite's love.
Let Palamon oppreſs'd in bondage mourn,
While to his exil'd rival we return.
By this, the ſun, declining from his height,
The day had ſhorten'd to prolong the night:
The lengthen'd night gave length of miſery
Both to the captive lover and the free.
For Palamon in endleſs priſon mourns,
And Arcite forfeits life if he returns:

The baniſh'd never hopes his love to ſee,
Nor hopes the captive lord his liberty:
'Tis hard to ſay who ſuffers greater pains:
One ſees his love, but cannot break his chains:
One free, and all his motions uncontrol'd,
Beholds whate'er he wou'd, but what he wou'd behold.
Judge as you pleaſe, for I will haſte to tell
What fortune to the baniſh'd knight befel.
When Arcite was to Thebes return'd again,
The loſs of her he lov'd renew'd his pain;
What cou'd be worſe, than never more to ſee
His life, his ſoul, his charming Emily?
He rav'd with all the madneſs of deſpair,
He roar'd, he beat his breaſt, he tore his hair,
Dry ſorrow in his ſtupid eyes appears,
For wanting nouriſhment, he wanted tears:
His eye-balls in their hollow ſockets ſink,
Bereft of ſleep he loaths his meat and drink,
He withers at his heart, and looks as wan
As the pale ſpectre of a murder'd man:
That pale turns yellow, and his face receives
The faded hue of ſapleſs boxen leaves:
In ſolitary groves he makes his moan,
Walks early out, and ever is alone:
Nor, mix'd in mirth, in youthful pleaſures ſhares,
But ſighs when ſongs and inſtruments he hears.
His ſpirits are ſo low, his voice is drown'd,
He hears as from afar, or in a ſwoon,
Like the deaf murmurs of a diſtant ſound:
Uncomb'd his locks, and ſqualid his attire,
Unlike the trim of love and gay deſire;
But full of muſeful mopings, which preſage
The loſs of reaſon, and conclude in rage.
This when he had endur'd a year and more,
Now wholly chang'd from what he was before,
It happen'd once, that, ſlumb'ring as he lay,
He dream'd, (his dream began at break of day)

That Hermes o'er his head in air appear'd,
And with ſoft words his drooping ſpirits chear'd:
His hat, adorn'd with wings, diſclos'd the God,
And in his hand he bore the ſleep-compelling rod:
Such as he ſeem'd, when, at his fire's command,
On Argus' head he laid the ſnaky wand.
Ariſe, he ſaid, to conqu'ring Athens go,
There fate appoints an end to all thy woe.
The fright awaken'd Arcite with a ſtart,
Againſt his boſom bounc'd his heaving heart;
But ſoon he ſaid, with ſcarce-recover'd breath,
And thither will I go, to meet my death,
Sure to be ſlain; but death is my deſire,
Since in Emilia's ſight I ſhall expire.
By chance he ſpy'd a mirror while he ſpoke,
And gazing there beheld his alter'd look;
Wond'ring, he ſaw his features and his hue
So much were chang'd, that ſcarce himſelf he knew.
A ſudden thought then ſtarting in his mind,
Since I in Arcite cannot Arcite find,
The world may ſearch in vain with all their eyes,
But never penetrate thro' this diſguiſe.
Thanks to the change which grief and ſickneſs give,
In low eſtate I may ſecurely live,
And ſee unknown my miſtreſs day by day.
He ſaid; and cloth'd himſelf in coarſe array:
A lab'ring hind in ſhew; then forth he went,
And to th' Athenian tow'rs his journey bent:
One ſquire attended in the ſame diſguiſe,
Made conſcious of his maſter's enterprize.
Arriv'd at Athens ſoon he came to court,
Unknown, unqueſtion'd in that thick reſort:
Proff'ring for hire his ſervice at the gate,
To drudge, draw water, and to run or wait.
So fair befel him, that for little gain
He ſerv'd at firſt Emilia's chamberlain;

And, watchful all advantages to ſpy,
Was ſtill at hand, and in his maſter's eye;
And as his bones were big, and ſinews ſtrong,
Refus'd no toil that could to ſlaves belong;
But from deep wells with engines water drew,
And us'd his noble hands the wood to hew.
He paſs'd a year at leaſt attending thus
On Emily, and call'd Philoſtratus.
But never was there man of his degree
So much eſteem'd, ſo well belov'd as he.
So gentle of condition was he known,
That through the court his courteſy was blown:
All think him worthy of a greater place,
And recommend him to the royal grace;
That exercis'd within a higher ſphere,
His virtues more conſpicuous might appear.
Thus by the gen'ral voice was Arcite prais'd,
And by great Theſeus to high favor rais'd;
Among his menial ſervants firſt enroll'd,
And largely entertain'd with ſums of gold:
Beſides what ſecretly from Thebes was ſent,
Of his own income, and his annual rent:
This well employ'd, he purchas'd friends and fame,
But cautiouſly conceal'd from whence it came.
Thus for three years he liv'd with large increaſe,
In arms of honor, and eſteem in peace;
To Theſeus' perſon he was ever near;
And Theſeus for his virtues held him dear.

PALAMON and ARCITE:

OR, THE

KNIGHT's TALE.

BOOK II.

WHILE Arcite lives in bliſs, the ſtory turns
Where hopeleſs Palamon in priſon mourns.
For ſix long years immur'd, the captive knight
Had dragg'd his chains, and ſcarcely ſeen the light:
Loſt liberty, and love at once he bore:
His priſon pain'd him much, his paſſion more:
Nor dares he hope his fetters to remove,
Nor ever wiſhes to be free from love.
But when the ſixth revolving year was run,
And May within the Twins receiv'd the ſun,
Were it by chance, or forceful deſtiny,
Which forms in cauſes firſt whate'er ſhall be,
Aſſiſted by a friend, one moonleſs night,
This Palamon from priſon took his flight:
A pleaſant beverage he prepar'd before
Of wine and honey mix'd with added ſtore
Of opium; to his keeper this he brought,
Who ſwallow'd unaware the ſleepy draught,
And ſnor'd ſecure till morn, his ſenſes bound
In ſlumber, and in long oblivion drown'd.
Short was the night, and careful Palamon
Sought the next covert e'er the riſing ſun.
A thick ſpread foreſt near the city lay,
To this with lengthen'd ſtrides he took his way,
(For far he could not fly, and fear'd the day.)

Safe

Safe from purſuit, he meant to ſhun the light,
Till the brown ſhadows of the friendly night
To Thebes might favour his intended flight.
When to his country come, his next deſign
Was all the Theban race in arms to join,
And war on Theſeus, till he loſt his life,
Or won the beauteous Emily to wife.
Thus while his thoughts the ling'ring day beguile,
To gentle Arcite let us turn our ſtile;
Who little dreamt how nigh he was to care,
Till treacherous fortune caught him in the ſnare.
The morning-lark, the meſſenger of day,
Saluted in her ſong the morning gray;
And ſoon the ſun aroſe with beams ſo bright,
That all th' horizon laugh'd to ſee the joyous ſight;
He with his tepid rays the roſe renews,
And licks the drooping leaves, and dries the dews;
When Arcite left his bed, reſolv'd to pay
Obſervance to the month of merry May:
Forth on his fiery ſteed betimes he rode,
That ſcarcely prints the turf on which he trod:
At eaſe he ſeem'd, and, prancing o'er the plains,
Turn'd only to the grove his horſe's reins,
The grove I nam'd before; and, lighted there,
A woodbine garland ſought to crown his hair;
Then turn'd his face againſt the riſing day,
And rais'd his voice to welcome in the May.

For thee, ſweet month, the groves green liv'ries wear,
If not the firſt, the faireſt of the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flow'rs:
When thy ſhort reign is paſt, the fev'riſh ſun
The ſultry tropic fears, and moves more ſlowly on.
So may thy tender bloſſoms fear no blite,
Nor goats with venom'd teeth thy tendrils bite,
As thou ſhalt guide my wand'ring feet to find
The fragrant greens I ſeek, my brows to bind.

His vows addreſs'd, within the grove he ſtray'd,
Till fate, or fortune, near the place convey'd
His ſteps where ſecret Palamon was laid.
Full little thought of him the gentle knight,
Who flying death had there conceal'd his flight,
In brakes and brambles hid, and ſhunning mortal fight.
And leſs he knew him for his hated foe,
But fear'd him as a man he did not know.
But as it has been ſaid of ancient years,
That fields are full of eyes, and woods have ears;
For this the wiſe are ever on their guard,
For, unforeſeen, they ſay, is unprepar'd.
Uncautious Arcite thought himſelf alone,
And leſs than all ſuſpected Palamon,
Who liſtning heard him, while he ſearch'd the grove,
And loudly ſung his roundelay of love:
But on the ſudden ſtopp'd, and ſilent ſtood,
As lovers often muſe, and change their mood;
Now high as heav'n, and then as low as hell;
Now up, now down, as buckets in a well:
For Venus, like her day, will change her cheer,
And ſeldom ſhall we ſee a Friday clear.
Thus Arcite having ſung, with alter'd hue
Sunk on the ground, and from his boſom drew
A deſp'rate ſigh, accuſing heav'n and fate,
And angry Juno's unrelenting hate.
Curs'd be the day when firſt I did appear;
Let it be blotted from the calendar,
Leſt it pollute the month, and poiſon all the year.
Still will the jealous queen purſue our race?
Cadmus is dead, the Theban city was:
Yet ceaſes not her hate: for all who come
From Cadmus are involv'd in Cadmus' doom.
I ſuffer for my blood: unjuſt decree!
That puniſhes another's crime on me.
In mean eſtate I ſerve my mortal foe,
The man who caus'd my country's overthrow.

This is not all; for Juno, to my ſhame,
Has forc'd me to forſake my former name;
Arcite I was, Philoſtratus I am.
That ſide of heav'n is all my enemy:
Mars ruin'd Thebes: his mother ruin'd me.
Of all the royal race remains but one
Beſides myſelf, th' unhappy Palamon,
Whom Theſeus holds in bonds, and will not free;
Without a crime, except his kin to me.
Yet theſe, and all the reſt, I cou'd endure;
But love's a malady without a cure;
Fierce love has pierc'd me with his fiery dart,
He fires within, and hiſſes at my heart.
Your eyes, fair Emily, my fate purſue;
I ſuffer for the reſt, I die for you.
Of ſuch a goddeſs no time leaves record,
Who burn'd the temple where ſhe was ador'd:
And let it burn, I never will complain,
Pleas'd with my ſuff'rings, if you knew my pain.
At this a ſickly qualm his heart aſſail'd,
His ears ring inward, and his ſenſes fail'd.
No word miſs'd Palamon of all he ſpoke,
But ſoon to deadly pale he chang'd his look:
He trembled ev'ry limb, and felt a ſmart,
As if cold ſteel had glided through his heart;
No longer ſtaid, but ſtarting from his place,
Diſcover'd ſtood, and ſhew'd his hoſtile face:
Falſe traitor Arcite, traitor to thy blood,
Bound by thy ſacred oath to ſeek my good,
Now art thou found forſworn, for Emily;
And dar'ſt attempt her love, for whom I die.
So haſt thou cheated Theſeus with a wile,
Againſt thy vow, returning to beguile
Under a borrow'd name: as falſe to me,
So falſe thou art to him who ſet thee free:
But reſt aſſur'd, that either thou ſhalt die,
Or elſe renounce thy claim in Emily:

For tho' unarm'd I am, and (freed by chance)
Am here without my ſword, or pointed lance:
Hope not, baſe man, unqueſtion'd hence to go,
For I am Palamon, thy mortal foe.
Arcite, who heard his tale, and knew the man,
His ſword unſheath'd, and fiercely thus began:
Now by the Gods who govern heav'n above,
Wert thou not weak with hunger, mad with love,
That word had been thy laſt, or in this grove
This hand ſhould force thee to renounce thy love.
The ſurety which I gave thee, I defy:
Fool, not to know that love endures no tie,
And Jove but laughs at lovers perjury.
Know I will ſerve the fair in thy deſpight;
But ſince thou art my kinſman, and a knight,
Here, have my faith, to-morrow in this grove
Our arms ſhall plead the titles of our love:
And Heaven ſo help my right, as I alone
Will come, and keep the cauſe and quarrel both unknown;
With arms of proof both for myſelf and thee;
Chuſe thou the beſt, and leave the worſt to me.
And, that a better eaſe thou may'ſt abide,
Bedding and cloaths I will this night provide,
And needful ſuſtenance, that thou may'ſt be
A conqueſt better won, and worthy me.
His promiſe Palamon accepts; but pray'd,
To keep it better than the firſt he made.
Thus fair they parted till the morrow's dawn,
For each had laid his plighted faith to pawn.
Oh Love! thou ſternly doſt thy pow'r maintain,
And wilt not bear a rival in thy reign,
Tyrants and thou all fellowſhip diſdain.
This was in Arcite prov'd, and Palamon
Both in deſpair, yet each would love alone.
Arcite return'd, and, as in honor ty'd,
His foe with bedding, and with food ſupply'd;

Then,

Then, ere the day, two ſuits of armour ſought,
Which borne before him on his ſteed he brought:
Both were of ſhining ſteel, and wrought ſo pure,
As might the ſtrokes of two ſuch arms endure.
Now, at the time, and in th' appointed place,
The challenger and challeng'd, face to face,
Approach; each other from afar they knew,
And from afar their hatred chang'd their hue.
So ſtands the Thracian herdſman with his ſpear,
Full in the gap, and hopes the hunted bear,
And hears him ruſtling in the wood, and ſees
His courſe at diſtance by the bending trees;
And thinks, here comes my mortal enemy,
And either he muſt fall in fight, or I:
This while he thinks, he lifts aloft his dart;
A gen'rous chilneſs ſeizes ev'ry part:
The veins pour back the blood, and fortify the heart.
Thus pale they meet; their eyes with fury burn;
None greets; for none the greeting will return:
But in dumb ſurlineſs, each arm'd with care
His foe profeſt, as brother of the war:
Then both, no moment loſt, at once advance
Againſt each other, arm'd with ſword and lance:
They laſh, they foin, they paſs, they ſtrive to bore
Their corſlets and the thinneſt parts explore.
Thus two long hours in equal arms they ſtood,
And wounded, wound; till both were bath'd in blood;
And not a foot of ground had either got,
As if the world depended on the ſpot.
Fell Arcite like an angry tyger far'd,
And like a lion Palamon appear'd:
Or as two boars whom love to battle draws,
With riſing briſtles, and with froathy jaws,
Their adverſe breaſts with tuſks oblique they wound;
With grunts and groans the foreſt rings around.
So fought the knights, and fighting muſt abide,
Till fate an umpire ſends their diff'rence to decide.

The pow'r that miniſters to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what heav'n foreſees,
Call'd providence, or chance, or fatal ſway,
Comes with reſiſtleſs force, and finds or makes her way.
Nor kings, nor nations, nor united pow'r,
One moment can retard th' appointed hour.
And ſome one day, ſome wond'rous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years:
For ſure, whate'er we mortals hate, or love,
Or hope, or fear, depends on pow'rs above;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foreſight neceſſitate the will.
In Theſeus this appears; whoſe youthful joy
Was beaſts of chaſe in foreſts to deſtroy,
This gentle knight, inſpir'd by jolly May,
Forſook his eaſy couch at early day,
And to the wood and wilds purſu'd his way.
Beſide him rode Hippolita the queen,
And Emily attir'd in lively green,
With horns, and hounds, and all the tuneful cry,
To hunt a royal hart within the covert nigh:
And as he follow'd Mars before, ſo now
He ſerves the goddeſs of the ſilver bow.
The way that Theſeus took was to the wood
Where the two knights in cruel battle ſtood:
The lawn on which they fought, th' appointed place
In which th' uncoupled hounds began the chace.
Thither forth-right he rode to rouſe the prey,
That ſhaded by the fern in harbour lay;
And thence diſlodg'd, was wont to leave the wood,
For open fields, and croſs the chryſtal flood.
Approach'd, and looking underneath the ſun,
He ſaw proud Arcite, and fierce Palamon,
In mortal battle doubling blow on blow,
Like lightning flam'd their fauchions to and fro,

And ſhot a dreadful gleam; ſo ſtrong they ſtrook,
There ſeem'd leſs force requir'd to fell an oak:
He gaz'd with wonder on their equal might,
Look'd eager on, but knew not either knight:
Reſolv'd to learn, he ſpurr'd his fiery ſteed
With goring rowels to provoke his ſpeed.
The minute ended that began the race,
So ſoon he was betwixt 'em on the place;
And with his ſword unſheath'd, on pain of life
Commands both combatants to ceaſe their ſtrife:
Then with imperious tone purſues his threat;
What are you? why in arms together met?
How dares your pride preſume againſt my laws,
As in a liſted field to fight your cauſe?
Unaſk'd the royal grant; no marſhal by,
As knightly rites require; nor judge to try?
Then Palamon, with ſcarce recover'd breath,
Thus haſty ſpoke: We both deſerve the death,
And both wou'd die; for look the world around,
A pair ſo wretched is not to be found,
Our life's a load; encumber'd with the charge,
We long to ſet th' impriſon'd ſoul at large.
Now as thou art a ſovereign judge, decree
The rightful doom of death to him and me,
Let neither find thy grace; for grace is cruelty.
Me firſt, O kill me firſt; and cure my woe:
Then ſheath the ſword of juſtice on my foe:
Or kill him firſt; for when his name is heard,
He foremoſt will receive his due reward.
Arcite of Thebes is he; thy mortal foe:
On whom thy grace did liberty beſtow,
But firſt contracted, that if ever found
By day or night upon th' Athenian ground,
His head ſhould pay the forfeit; ſee return'd
The perjur'd knight, his oath and honour ſcorn'd.

For

For this is he, who, with a borrow'd name
And proffer'd ſervice, to thy palace came,
Now call'd Philoſtratus: retain'd by thee,
A traitor truſted, and in high degree,
Aſpiring to the bed of beauteous Emily.
My part remains; from Thebes my birth I own,
And call myſelf th' unhappy Palamon.
Think me not like that man; ſince no diſgrace
Can force me to renounce the honour of my race.
Know me for what I am: I broke my chain,
Nor promis'd I thy pris'ner to remain:
The love of liberty with life is giv'n,
And life itſelf th' inferior gift of Heav'n.
Thus without crime I fled; but farther know,
I with this Arcite am thy mortal foe:
Then give me death, ſince I thy life purſue;
For ſafeguard of thyſelf, death is my due,
More wou'dſt thou know? I love bright Emily,
And for her ſake and in her ſight will die:
But kill my rival too; for he no leſs
Deſerves; and I thy righteous doom will bleſs,
Aſſur'd that what I loſe, he never ſhall poſſeſs.
To this reply'd the ſtern Athenian prince,
And ſourly ſmil'd, In owning your offence
You judge yourſelf; and I but keep record
In place of law, while you pronounce the word.
Take your deſert, the death you have decreed;
I ſeal your doom, and ratify the deed:
By Mars, the patron of my arms, you die.
He ſaid; dumb ſorrow ſeiz'd the ſtanders-by.
The queen above the reſt, by nature good,
(The pattern form'd of perfect womanhood)
For tender pity wept: when ſhe began,
Thro' the bright quire th' infectious virtue ran.
All dropt their tears, ev'n the contended maid:
And thus among themſelves they ſoftly ſaid:

What eyes can ſuffer this unworthy ſight!
Two youths of royal blood, renown'd in fight,
The maſterſhip of heav'n in face and mind,
And lovers, far beyond their faithleſs kind:
See their wide ſtreaming wounds; they neither came
For pride of empire, nor deſire of fame:
Kings fight for kingdoms, madmen for applauſe:
But love for love alone; that crowns the lover's cauſe.
This thought, which ever bribes the beauteous kind,
Such pity wrought in ev'ry lady's mind,
They left their ſteeds, and proſtrate on the place,
From th' fierce king, implor'd th' offenders grace.
He paus'd a while, ſtood ſilent in his mood,
(For yet his rage was boiling in his blood;)
But ſoon his tender mind th' impreſſion felt,
(As ſofteſt metals are not ſlow to melt,
And pity ſooneſt runs in ſofteſt minds:)
Then reaſons with himſelf; and firſt he finds
His paſſion caſt a miſt before his ſenſe,
And either made, or magnify'd th' offence.
Offence! of what? to whom? who judg'd the cauſe?
The pris'ner freed himſelf by nature's laws:
Born free, he ſought his right: the man he freed
Was perjur'd, but his love excus'd the deed:
Thus pondering, he look'd under with his eyes,
And ſaw the women's tears, and heard their cries;
Which mov'd compaſſion more, he ſhook his head,
And ſoftly ſighing to himſelf he ſaid:
Curſe on th' unpard'ning prince, whom tears can draw
To no remorſe; who rules by lions law;
And deaf to pray'rs, by no ſubmiſſion bow'd,
Rends all alike; the penitent, and proud:
At this, with look ſerene, he rais'd his head;
Reaſon reſum'd her place, and paſſion fled:
Then thus aloud he ſpoke: the pow'r of love,
In earth, and ſeas, and air, and heav'n above,

Rules,

Rules, unreſiſted, with an awful nod;
By daily miracles declar'd a God:
He blinds the wiſe, gives eye-ſight to the blind;
And moulds and ſtamps anew the lover's mind.
Behold that Arcite, and this Palamon,
Freed from my fetters, and in ſafety gone,
What hinder'd either in their native ſoil
At eaſe to reap the harveſt of their toil;
But Love, their lord, did otherwiſe ordain,
And brought 'em in their own deſpite again,
To ſuffer death deſerv'd; for well they know,
'Tis in my pow'r, and I their deadly foe;
The proverb holds, that to be wiſe and love,
Is hardly granted to the Gods above.
See how the madmen bleed: behold the gains
With which their maſter, Love, rewards their pains;
For ſev'n long years, on duty ev'ry day,
Lo their obedience, and their monarch's pay:
Yet, as in duty bound, they ſerve him on;
And, aſk the fools, they think it wiſely done;
Nor eaſe, nor wealth, nor life itſelf regard,
For 'tis their maxim, Love is love's reward.
This is not all; the fair for whom they ſtrove
Nor knew before, nor could ſuſpect their love,
Nor thought, when ſhe beheld the fight from far,
Her beauty was th' occcaſion of the war.
But ſure a general doom on man is paſt;
And all are fools and lovers, firſt or laſt:
This both by others and myſelf I know,
For I have ſerv'd their ſov'reign long ago;
Oft have been caught within the winding train
Of female ſnares, and felt the lover's pain,
And learn'd how far the God can human hearts conſtrain.
To this remembrance, and the prayers of thoſe
Who for th' offending warriors interpoſe,

I give their forfeit lives; on this accord,
To do me homage as their ſov'reign lord;
And as my vaſſals, to their utmoſt might,
Aſſiſt my perſon, and aſſert my right.
This freely ſworn, the knights their grace obtain'd.
Then thus the king his ſecret thought explain'd;
If wealth, or honour, or a royal race,
Or each, or all, may win a lady's grace,
Then either of you knights may well deſerve
A princeſs born; and ſuch is ſhe you ſerve:
For Emily is ſiſter to the crown,
And, but too well to both her beauty known:
But ſhou'd you combat till you both were dead,
Two lovers cannot ſhare a ſingle bed:
As therefore both are equal in degree,
The lot of both be left to deſtiny.
Now hear th' award, and happy may it prove
To her, and him who beſt deſerves her love.
Depart from hence in peace, and free as air,
Search the wide world, and where you pleaſe repair;
But on the day when this returning ſun
To the ſame point through ev'ry ſign has run,
Then each of you his hundred knights ſhall bring,
In royal liſts, to fight before the king;
And then the knight, whom fate or happy chance
Shall with his friends to victory advance,
And grace his arms ſo far in equal fight,
From out the bars to force his oppoſite,
Or kill, or make him recreant on the plain,
The prize of valour and of love ſhall gain;
The vanquiſh'd party ſhall their claim releaſe,
And the long jars conclude in laſting peace.
The charge be mine t' adorn the choſen ground,
The theatre of war, for champions ſo renown'd;
And take the patron's place of either knight,
With eyes impartial to behold the fight;
And Heav'n of me ſo judge as I ſhall judge aright.

If both are ſatisfied with this accord,
Swear by the laws of knighthood on my ſword.
Who now but Palamon exults with joy?
And raviſh'd Arcite ſeems to touch the ſky:
The whole aſſembled troop was pleas'd as well,
Extol th' award, and on their knees they fell
To bleſs the gracious king. The knights with leave
Departing from the place, his laſt commands receive;
On Emily with equal ardor look,
And from her eyes their inſpiration took.
From thence to Thebes' old walls purſue their way,
Each to provide his champions for the day.
It might be deem'd, on our hiſtorian's part,
Or too much negligence, or want of art,
If he forgot the vaſt magnificence
Of royal Theſeus, and his large expence.
He firſt inclos'd for liſts a level ground,
The whole circumference a mile round;
The form was circular; and all without
A trench was ſunk, to moat the place about.
Within an amphitheatre appear'd,
Rais'd in degrees; to ſixty paces rear'd:
That when a man was plac'd in one degree,
Height was allow'd for him above to ſee.
Eaſtward was built a gate of marble white;
The like adorn'd the weſtern oppoſite.
A nobler object than this fabric was,
Rome never ſaw; nor of ſo vaſt a ſpace.
For rich with ſpoils of many a conquer'd land,
All arts and artiſts Theſeus could command;
Who ſold for hire, or wrought for better fame;
The maſter-painters, and the carvers came.
So roſe within the compaſs of the year
An age's work, a glorious theatre.
Then o'er its eaſtern gate was rais'd above
A temple, ſacred to the queen of love;

An altar ſtood below: on either hand
A prieſt with roſes crown'd, who held a myrtle wand.
The dome of Mars was on the gate oppos'd,
And on the north a turret was inclos'd,
Within the wall of alabaſter white,
And crimſon coral for the queen of night,
Who takes in ſylvan ſports her chaſte delight.
Within theſe oratories might you ſee
Rich carvings, pourtraitures, and imagery:
Where ev'ry figure to the life expreſs'd
The godhead's pow'r to whom it was addreſs'd.
In Venus' temple on the ſides were ſeen
The broken ſlumbers of enamour'd men,
Pray'rs that ev'n ſpoke, and pity ſeem'd to call,
And iſſuing ſighs that ſmok'd along the wall.
Complaints, and hot deſires, the lover's hell,
And ſcalding tears that wore a channel where they fell:
And all around were nuptial bonds, the ties,
Of love's aſſurance, and a train of lies,
That, made in luſt, conclude in perjuries.
Beauty, and youth, and wealth, and luxury,
And ſpritely hope, and ſhort-enduring joy;
And ſorceries to raiſe th' infernal pow'rs,
And ſigils fram'd in planetary hours:
Expence, and after-thought, and idle care,
And doubts of motley hue, and dark deſpair;
Suſpicious, and fantaſtical ſurmiſe,
And jealouſy ſuffus'd, with jaundice in her eyes,
Diſcolouring all ſhe view'd, in tawny dreſs'd;
Down-look'd, and with a cuckow on her fiſt.
Oppos'd to her, on t' other ſide advance
The coſtly feaſt, the carol, and the dance,
Minſtrels, and muſic, poetry, and play,
And balls by night, and tournaments by day.
All theſe were painted on the wall, and more;
With acts and monuments of times before;

And others added by prophetic doom,
And lovers yet unborn, and loves to come:
For there th' Idalian mount, and Citheron,
The court of Venus was in colours drawn:
Before the palace-gate, in careleſs dreſs,
And looſe array, ſat portreſs idleneſs:
There, by the fount, Narciſſus pin'd alone;
There Sampſon was; with wiſer Solomon,
And all the mighty names by love undone.
Medea's charms were there, Circean feaſts,
With bowls that turn'd enamour'd youths to beaſts,
Here might be ſeen, that beauty, wealth, and wit,
And proweſs to the pow'r of love ſubmit:
The ſpreading ſnare for all mankind is laid;
And lovers all betray, and are betray'd.
The goddeſs' ſelf ſome noble hand had wrought;
Smiling ſhe ſeem'd, and full of pleaſing thought:
From ocean as ſhe firſt began to riſe,
And ſmooth'd the ruffled ſeas and clear'd the ſkies;
She trod the brine all bare below the breaſt,
And the green waves but ill conceal'd the reſt;
A lute ſhe held; and on her head was ſeen
A wreath of roſes red, and myrtles green;
Her turtles fann'd the buxom air above;
And, by his mother, ſtood an infant love,
With wings unfledg'd; his eyes were banded o'er:
His hands a bow, his back a quiver bore,
Supply'd with arrows bright and keen, a deadly ſtore.
But in the dome of mighty Mars the red
With diff'rent figures all the ſides were ſpread;
This temple, leſs in form, with equal grace,
Was imitative of the firſt in Thrace:
For that cold region was the lov'd abode,
And ſov'reign manſion of the warrior god.
The landſcape was a foreſt wide and bare;
Where neither beaſt, nor human kind repair;

The fowl, that ſcent afar, the borders fly,
And ſhun the bitter blaſt, and wheel about the ſky.
A cake of ſcurf lies baking on the ground,
And prickly ſtubs, inſtead of trees, are found;
Or woods with knots and knares deform'd and old;
Headleſs the moſt, and hideous to behold:
A rattling tempeſt through the branches went,
That ſtripp'd 'em bare, and one ſole way they bent.
Heav'n froze above, ſevere, the clouds congeal,
And thro' the chryſtal vault appear'd the ſtanding hail.
Such was the face without: a mountain ſtood
Threatning from high, and overlook'd the wood:
Beneath the low'ring brow, and on a bent,
The temple ſtood of Mars armiponent:
The frame of burniſh'd ſteel, that caſt a glare
From far, and ſeem'd to thaw the freezing air.
A ſtrait long entry to the temple led,
Blind with high walls; and horror over head:
Thence iſſued ſuch a blaſt, and hollow roar,
As threaten'd from the hinge to heave the door;
In through that door, a northern light there ſhone;
'Twas all it had, for windows there were none,
The gate was adamant; eternal frame!
Which, hew'd by Mars himſelf, from Indian quarries came,
The labour of a God; and all along
Tough iron plates were clench'd to make it ſtrong.
A tun about was ev'ry pillar there;
A poliſh'd mirror ſhone not half ſo clear.
There ſaw I how the ſecret felon wrought,
And treaſon lab'ring in the traitor's thought:
And midwife time the ripen'd plot to murder brought,
There the red anger dar'd the pallid fear;
Next ſtood hypocriſy, with holy leer;
Soft ſmiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown:
Th' aſſaſſinating wife, the houſhold fiend;
And far the blackeſt there, the traitor-friend.

On t'other ſide there ſtood deſtruction bare;
Unpuniſh'd rapine, and a waſte of war.
Conteſt, with ſharpen'd knives, in cloiſters drawn,
And all with blood beſpread the holy lawn.
Loud menaces were heard, and foul diſgrace,
And bawling infamy, in language baſe;
Till ſenſe was loſt in ſound, and ſilence fled the place.
The ſlayer of himſelf yet ſaw I there,
The gore congeal'd was clotted in his hair:
With eyes half clos'd, and gaping mouth he lay,
And grim, as when he breath'd his ſullen ſoul away.
In midſt of all the dome, misfortune ſat,
And gloomy diſcontent, and fell debate,
And madneſs laughing in his ireful mood;
And arm'd complaint on theft; and cries of blood.
There was the murder'd corps, in covert laid,
And violent death in thouſand ſhapes diſplay'd:
The city to the ſoldiers rage reſign'd:
Succeſsleſs wars, and poverty behind:
Ships burnt in fight, or forc'd on rocky ſhores,
And the raſh hunter ſtrangled by the boars:
The new-born babe by nurſes overlaid;
And the cook caught within the raging fire he made.
All ills of Mars his nature, flame and ſteel;
The gaſping charioteer, beneath the wheel
Of his own car; the ruin'd houſe that falls
And intercepts her lord betwixt the walls:
The whole diviſion that to Mars pertains,
All trades of death that deal in ſteel for gains,
Were there: the butcher, armourer, and ſmith,
Who forges ſharpen'd fauchions, or the ſcythe.
The ſcarlet conqueſt on a tow'r was plac'd,
With ſhouts, and ſoldiers acclamations grac'd:
A pointed ſword hung threatning o'er his head,
Suſtain'd but by a ſlender twine of thread.
There ſaw I Mars his ides, the capitol,
The ſeer in vain foretelling Cæſar's fall;

The laſt triumvirs, and the wars they move,
And Anthony, who loſt the world for love.
Theſe, and a thouſand more, the fane adorn;
Their fates were painted ere the men were born,
All copied from the heav'ns, and ruling force
Of the red ſtar, in his revolving courſe.
The form of Mars high on a chariot ſtood,
All ſheath'd in arms, and gruffly look'd the God:
Two geomantic figures were diſplay'd
Above his head, a warrior and a maid,
One when direct, and one when retrograde.
Tir'd with deformities of death, I haſte
To the third temple of Diana chaſte.
A ſylvan ſcene with various greens was drawn,
Shades on the ſides, and on the midſt a lawn:
The ſilver Cynthia, with her nymphs around,
Purſu'd the flying deer, the woods with horns reſound:
Caliſto there ſtood manifeſt of ſhame,
And, turn'd a bear, the northern ſtar became:
Her ſon was next, and by peculiar grace
In the cold circle held the ſecond place:
The ſtag Acteon in the ſtream had ſpy'd
The naked huntreſs, and, for ſeeing dy'd:
His hounds, unknowing of his change purſue
The chace, and their miſtaken maſter ſlew.
Peneian Daphne too was there to ſee,
Apollo's love before, and now his tree:
Th' adjoining fane th' aſſembled Greeks expreſs'd,
And hunting of the Caledonian beaſt.
Oenides' valor, and his envy'd prize;
The fatal pow'r of Atalanta's eyes;
Diana's vengeance on the victor ſhown,
The murdreſs mother; and conſuming ſon;
The Volſcian queen extended on the plain;
The treaſon puniſh'd, and the traitor ſlain.
The reſt were various huntings, well deſign'd,
And ſavage beaſts deſtroy'd, of ev'ry kind.

The graceful goddeſs was array'd in green;
About her feet were little beagles ſeen,
That watch'd with upward eyes the motions of their queen.
Her legs were buſkin'd, and the left before;
In act to ſhoot, a ſilver bow ſhe bore,
And at her back a painted quiver wore.
She trod a wexing moon, that ſoon would wane,
And drinking borrow'd light, be fill'd again:
With downcaſt eyes, as ſeeming to ſurvey
The dark dominions, her alternate ſway.
Before her ſtood a woman in her throes,
And call'd Lucina's aid, her burden to diſcloſe.
All theſe the painter drew with ſuch command,
That Nature ſnatch'd the pencil from his hand,
Aſham'd and angry that his art could feign
And mend the tortures of a mother's pain.
Theſeus beheld the fanes of ev'ry God,
And thought his mighty coſt was well beſtow'd.
So princes now their poets ſhould regard;
But few can write, and fewer can reward.
The theatre thus rais'd, the liſts enclos'd,
And all with vaſt magnificence diſpos'd,
We leave the monarch pleas'd, and haſte to bring
The knights to combat; and their arms to ſing.

PALAMON and ARCITE;

OR, THE

KNIGHT's TALE.

BOOK III.

THE day approach'd when Fortune ſhould decide
Th' important enterprize, and give the bride;
For now, the rivals round the world had ſought,
And each his rival, well appointed, brought.
The nations, far and near, contend in choice,
And ſend the flow'r of war by public voice;
That after, or before, were never known
Such chiefs, as each an army ſeem'd alone:
Beſide the champions; all of high degree,
Who knighthood lov'd, and deeds of chivalry,
Throng'd to the liſts, and envy'd to behold
The names of others, not their own, enroll'd.
Nor ſeems it ſtrange; for ev'ry noble knight
Who loves the fair, and is endu'd with might,
In ſuch a quarrel wou'd be proud to fight.
There breathes not ſcarce a man on Britiſh ground
(An iſle for love and arms of old renown'd)
But would have ſold his life to purchaſe fame,
To Palamon or Arcite ſent his name:
And had the land ſelected of the beſt,
Half had come hence, and let the world provide the reſt.
A hundred knights with Palamon there came,
Approv'd in fight, and men of mighty name;
Their arms were ſev'ral, as their nations were,
But furniſh'd all alike with ſword and ſpear.
Some wore coat armor, imitating ſcale;
And next their ſkins were ſtubborn ſhirts of mail.

Some

Some wore a breaſtplate and a light juppon,
Their horſes cloth'd with rich capariſon;
Some for defence would leathern bucklers uſe,
Of folded hides; and other ſhields of pruce.
One hung a pole-axe at his ſaddle-bow,
And one a heavy mace to ſhun the foe;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeux arm'd, and double plates of ſteel:
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a ſleeve embroider'd by his love.
With Palamon above the reſt in place,
Lycurgus came, the ſurly king of Thrace;
Black was his beard, and manly was his face;
The balls of his broad eyes roll'd in his head,
And glar'd betwixt a yellow and a red:
He look'd a lion with a gloomy ſtare,
And o'er his eye-brows hung his matted hair:
Big-bon'd, and large of limbs, with ſinews ſtrong,
Broad-ſhoulder'd, and his arms were round and long.
Four milk-white bulls (the Thracian uſe of old)
Were yok'd to draw his car of burniſh'd gold.
Upright he ſtood, and bore aloft his ſhield,
Conſpicuous from afar, and overlook'd the field.
His ſurcoat was a bear-ſkin on his back;
His hair hung long behind, and gloſſy raven black.
His ample forehead bore a coronet
With ſparkling diamonds, and with rubies ſet:
Ten brace, and more, of greyhounds, ſnowy fair,
And tall as ſtags, ran looſe, and cours'd around his chair,
A match for pards in flight, in grappling for the bear:
With golden muzzles all their mouths were bound,
And collars of the ſame their necks ſurround.
Thus through the fields Lycurgus took his way;
His hundred knights attend in pomp and proud array.
To match this monarch, with ſtrong Arcite came
Emetrius king of Inde, a mighty name,

On

On a bay courſer, goodly to behold,
The trappings of his horſe adorn'd with barb'rous gold.
Not Mars beſtrode a ſteed with greater grace;
His ſurcoat o'er his arms was cloth of Thrace,
Adorn'd with pearls, all orient, round, and great;
His ſaddle was of gold, with emeralds ſet,
His ſhoulders large a mantle did attire,
With rubies thick, and ſparkling as the fire:
His amber-colour'd locks in ringlets run,
With graceful negligence, and ſhone againſt the ſun.
His noſe was aquiline, his eyes were blue.
Ruddy his lips, and freſh and fair his hue:
Some ſprinkled freckles on his face were ſeen,
Whoſe duſk ſet off the whiteneſs of the ſkin:
His awful preſence did the croud ſurprize,
Nor durſt the raſh ſpectator meet his eyes,
Eyes that confeſs'd him born for kingly ſway,
So fierce, they flaſh'd intolerable day.
His age in nature's youthful prime appear'd,
And juſt began to bloom his yellow beard.
Whene'er he ſpoke, his voice was heard around,
Loud as a trumpet, with a ſilver ſound,
A laurel wreath'd his temples, freſh, and green;
And myrtle ſprigs, the marks of love, were mix'd between.
Upon his fiſt he bore, for his delight,
An eagle well reclaim'd, and lilly white.
His hundred knights attend him to the war,
All arm'd for battle; ſave their heads were bare.
Words and devices blaz'd on ev'ry ſhield,
And pleaſing was the terror of the field.
For kings, and dukes, and barons, you might ſee,
Like ſparkling ſtars, though different in degree,
All for th' increaſe of arms, and love of chivalry.
Before the king tame leopards led the way,
And troops of lions innocently play.
So Bacchus thro' the conquer'd Indies rode,
And beaſts in gambols friſk'd before their honeſt god.

In this array the war of either ſide
Through Athens paſs'd with military pride.
At prime, they enter'd on the Sunday morn;
Rich tap'ſtry ſpread the ſtreets, and flow'rs the poſts adorn.
The town was all a jubilee of feaſts;
So Theſeus will'd, in honour of his gueſts;
Himſelf with open arms the king embrac'd,
Then all the reſt in their degrees were grac'd.
No harbinger was needful for the night,
For ev'ry houſe was proud to lodge a knight.
I paſs the royal treat, nor muſt relate
The gifts beſtow'd, nor how the champions ſate:
Who firſt, or laſt, or how the knights addreſs'd
Their vows, or who was faireſt at the feaſt;
Whoſe voice, whoſe graceful dance did moſt ſurpriſe;
Soft am'rous ſighs, and ſilent love of eyes.
The rivals call my Muſe another way,
To ſing their vigils for the enſuing day.
'Twas ebbing darkneſs, paſt the noon of night:
And Phoſphor, on the confines of the light;
Promis'd the ſun, ere day began to ſpring;
The tuneful lark already ſtretch'd her wing,
And flick'ring on her neſt, made ſhort eſſays to ſing.
When wakeful Palamon, preventing day,
Took, to the royal lifts, his early way,
To Venus at her fane, in her own houſe, to pray.
There, falling on his knees before her ſhrine,
He thus implor'd with pray'rs her pow'r divine.
Creator Venus, genial pow'r of love,
The bliſs of men below, and Gods above!
Beneath the ſliding ſun thou runn'ſt thy race,
Doſt faireſt ſhine, and beſt become thy place.
For thee the winds their eaſtern blaſts forbear,
Thy month reveals the ſpring, and opens all the year.
Thee, Goddeſs, thee the ſtorms of winter fly,
Earth ſmiles with flow'rs renewing, laughs the ſky,
And birds to lays of love their tuneful notes apply.

For thee the lion loaths the taſte of blood,
And roaring hunts his female through the wood:
For thee the bulls rebellow through the groves,
And tempt the ſtream, and ſnuff their abſent loves.
'Tis thine, whate'er is pleaſant, good, or fair:
All nature is thy province, life thy care:
Thou mad'ſt the world, and doſt the world repair.
Thou gladder of the mount of Cytheron,
Increaſe of Jove, companion of the ſun;
If e'er Adonis touch'd thy tender heart,
Have pity, Goddeſs, for thou know'ſt the ſmart.
Alas! I have not words to tell my grief;
To vent my ſorrow would be ſome relief;
Light ſuff'rings give us leiſure to complain;
We groan, but cannot ſpeak, in greater pain.
O Goddeſs, tell thyſelf what I would ſay,
Thou know'ſt it, and I feel too much to pray.
So grant my ſuit, as I enforce my might;
In love to be thy champion, and thy knight;
A ſervant to thy ſex, a ſlave to thee,
A foe profeſt to barren chaſtity.
Nor aſk I fame or honour of the field,
Nor chooſe I more to vanquiſh than to yield:
In my divine Emelia make me bleſt,
Let fate, or partial chance, diſpoſe the reſt:
Find thou the manner, and the means prepare;
Poſſeſſion, more than conqueſt, is my care.
Mars is the warrior's god; in him it lies,
On whom he favors to confer the prize;
With ſmiling aſpect you ſerenely move
In your fifth orb, and rule the realm of love.
The fates but only ſpin the coarſer clue,
The fineſt of the wool is left for you.
Spare me but one ſmall portion of the twine,
And let the ſiſters cut below your line:
The reſt among the rubbiſh may they ſweep,
Or add it to the yarn of ſome old miſer's heap.

But, if you this ambitious pray'r deny,
(A wiſh, I grant, beyond mortality,)
Then let me ſink beneath proud Arcite's arms,
And I, once dead, let him poſſeſs her charms.
Thus ended he; then, with obſervance due
The ſacred incenſe on her altar threw:
The curling ſmoke mounts heavy from the fires;
At length it catches flame, and in a blaze expires;
At once the gracious Goddeſs gave the ſign,
Her ſtatue ſhook, and trembled all the ſhrine:
Pleas'd Palamon the tardy omen took:
For, ſince the flames purſu'd the trailing ſmoke,
He knew his boon was granted; but the day
To diſtance driv'n, and joy adjourn'd with long delay.
Now morn with roſy light had ſtreak'd the ſky,
Up roſe the ſun, and up roſe Emily;
Addreſs'd her early ſteps to Cynthia's fane,
In ſtate attended by her maiden train,
Who bore the veſts that holy rites require,
Incenſe, and od'rous gums, and cover'd fire.
The plenteous horns with pleaſant mead they crown,
Nor wanted ought beſides in honour of the moon.
Now while the temple ſmok'd with hallow'd ſteam,
They waſh the virgin in a living ſtream;
The ſecret ceremonies I conceal,
Uncouth, perhaps unlawful, to reveal:
But ſuch they were as pagan uſe requir'd,
Perform'd by women when the men retir'd,
Whoſe eyes profane their chaſte myſterious rites
Might turn to ſcandal, or obſcene delights.
Well-meaners think no harm; but for the reſt,
Things ſacred they pervert, and ſilence is the beſt.
Her ſhining hair, uncomb'd, was looſely ſpread,
A crown of maſtleſs oak adorn'd her head:
When to the ſhrine approach'd, the ſpotleſs maid
Had kindling fires on either altar laid:

(The rites were ſuch as were obſerv'd of old,
By Statius in his Theban ſtory told.)
Then kneeling with her hands acroſs her breaſt,
Thus lowly ſhe preferr'd her chaſte requeſt.
O Goddeſs, haunter of the woodland green,
To whom both heav'n and earth and ſeas are ſeen;
Queen of the nether ſkies, where half the year
Thy ſilver beams deſcend, and light the gloomy ſphere;
Goddeſs of maids, and conſcious of our hearts,
So keep me from the vengeance of thy darts,
Which Niobe's devoted iſſue felt,
When hiſſing through the ſkies the feather'd deaths were dealt;
As I deſire to live a virgin life,
Nor know the name of mother or of wife.
Thy votreſs from my tender years I am,
And love like thee, the woods and ſylvan game.
Like death, thou know'ſt, I loath the nuptial ſtate,
And man, the tyrant of our ſex, I hate,
A lowly ſervant, but a lofty mate;
Where love is duty on the female ſide;
On their's meer ſenſual guſt, and ſought with ſurly pride.
Now by thy triple ſhape, as thou art ſeen
In heav'n, earth, hell, and ev'ry where a queen,
Grant this my firſt deſire; let diſcord ceaſe,
And make betwixt the rivals laſting peace:
Quench their hot fire, or far from me remove
The flame, and turn it on ſome other love,
Or if my frowning ſtars have ſo decreed,
That one muſt be rejected, one ſucceed,
Make him my lord, within whoſe faithful breaſt
Is fix'd my image, and who loves me beſt.
But, oh! ev'n that avert! I chuſe it not,
But take it as the leaſt unhappy lot.
A maid I am, and of thy virgin train;
Oh, let me ſtill that ſpotleſs name retain!

Frequent

Frequent the foreſts, thy chaſte will obey,
And only make the beaſts of chaſe my prey!
The flames aſcend on either altar clear,
While thus the blameleſs maid addreſs'd her pray'r.
When lo! the burning fire that ſhone ſo bright,
Flew off all ſudden, with extinguiſh'd light,
And left one altar dark, a little ſpace;
Which turn'd ſelf-kindled, and renew'd the blaze;
The other victor-flame a moment ſtood,
Then fell, and lifeleſs left th' extinguiſh'd wood;
For ever loſt, th' irrevocable light
Forſook the blackning coals, and ſunk to night:
At either end it whiſtled as it flew,
And as the brands were green, ſo dropp'd the dew;
Infected as it fell with ſweat of ſanguine hue.
The maid from that ill omen turn'd her eyes,
And with loud ſhrieks and clamours rent the ſkies,
Nor knew what ſignify'd the boding ſign,
But found the pow'rs diſpleas'd, and fear'd the wrath divine.
Then ſhook the ſacred ſhrine, and ſudden light
Sprung thro' the vaulted roof, and made the temple bright.
The pow'r, behold! the pow'r in glory ſhone,
By her bent bow, and her keen arrows known;
The reſt, a huntreſs iſſuing from the wood,
Reclining on her cornel ſpear ſhe ſtood.
Then gracious thus began: Diſmiſs thy fear,
And Heav'n's unchang'd decrees attentive hear:
More pow'rful Gods have torn thee from my ſide,
Unwilling to reſign, and doom'd a bride:
The two contending knights are weigh'd above;
One Mars protects, and one the Queen of love:
But which the man, is in the Thund'rer's breaſt;
This he pronounc'd, 'tis he who loves thee beſt.
The fire that once extinct reviv'd again,
Foreſhews the love allotted to remain:

Farewel! ſhe ſaid, and vaniſh'd from the place;
The ſheaf of arrows ſhook, and rattled in the caſe.
Aghaſt at this, the royal virgin ſtood,
Diſclaim'd, and now no more a ſiſter of the wood:
But to the parting Goddeſs thus ſhe pray'd;
Propitious ſtill be preſent to my aid,
Nor quite abandon your once favour'd maid.
Then ſighing ſhe return'd; but ſmil'd betwixt,
With hopes and fears and joys with ſorrows mixt.
The next returning planetary hour
Of Mars, who ſhar'd the heptarchy of pow'r,
His ſteps bold Arcite to the temple bent,
T' adore with pagan rites the pow'r armipotent:
Then proſtrate, low before his altar lay,
And rais'd his manly voice, and thus began to pray,
Strong God of Arms, whoſe iron ſcepter ſways
The freezing North, and Hyperborean ſeas,
And Scythian colds, and Thracia's winter coaſt,
Where ſtand thy ſteeds, and thou art honour'd moſt:
There moſt; but ev'ry where thy pow'r is known,
The fortune of the fight is all thy own:
Terror is thine, and wild amazement, flung
From out thy chariot, withers ev'n the ſtrong:
And diſarray and ſhameful rout enſue,
And force is added to the fainting crew.
Acknowledg'd as thou art, accept my pray'r,
If ought I have atchiev'd deſerve thy care:
If to my utmoſt pow'r with ſword and ſhield
I dar'd the death, unknowing how to yield,
And falling in my rank, ſtill kept the field:
Then let my arms prevail, by thee ſuſtain'd,
That Emily by conqueſt may be gain'd.
Have pity on my pains; nor thoſe unknown
To Mars, which, when a lover, were his own,
Venus, the public care of all above,
Thy ſtubborn heart has ſoften'd into love;

Now

Now by her blandiſhments and powerful charms,
When yielded ſhe lay curling in thy arms,
Ev'n by thy ſhame, if ſhame it may be call'd,
When Vulcan had thee in his net inthrall'd;
O envy'd ignominy, ſweet diſgrace,
When ev'ry God that ſaw thee wiſh'd thy place!
By thoſe dear pleaſures, aid my arms in fight,
And make me conquer in my patron's right;
For I am young, a novice in the trade,
The fool of love, unpractis'd to perſuade:
And want the ſoothing arts that catch the fair,
But, caught myſelf, lie ſtruggling in the ſnare:
And ſhe I love, or laughs at all my pain,
Or knows her worth too well; and pays me with diſdain.
For ſure I am, unleſs I win in arms,
To ſtand excluded from Emilia's charms:
Nor can my ſtrength avail, unleſs by thee
Endu'd with force, I gain the victory;
Then for the fire which warm'd thy gen'rous heart,
Pity thy ſubject's pains, and equal ſmart.
So be the morrow's ſweat and labour mine,
The palm and honour of the conqueſt thine:
Then ſhall the war, and ſtern debate, and ſtrife
Immortal, be the bus'neſs of my life;
And in thy fane, the duſty ſpoils among,
High on the burniſh'd roof, my banner ſhall be hung;
Rank'd with my champion's bucklers, and below,
With arms revers'd, th' atchievements of my foe:
And while theſe limbs the vital ſpirit feeds,
While day to night, and night to day ſucceeds,
Thy ſmoking altar ſhall be fat with food
Of incenſe, and the grateful ſteam of blood;
Burnt-off'rings morn and ev'ning ſhall be thine;
And fires eternal in thy temple ſhine.
The buſh of yellow beard, this length of hair,
Which from my birth inviolate I bear,

Guiltleſs of ſteel, and from the razor free,
Shall fall a plenteous crop, reſerv'd for thee.
So may my arms with victory be bleſt,
I aſk no more; let fate diſpoſe the reſt.
The champion ceas'd; there follow'd in the cloſe
A hollow groan: a murm'ring wind aroſe;
The rings of iron, that on the doors were hung,
Sent out a jarring ſound, and harſhly rung:
The bolted gates flew open at the blaſt,
The ſtorm ruſh'd in, and Arcite ſtood aghaſt;
The flames were blown aſide, yet ſhone they bright,
Fann'd by the wind, and gave a ruffled light.
Then from the ground a ſcent began to riſe,
Sweet ſmelling as accepted ſacrifice:
This omen pleas'd, and as the flames aſpire
With od'rous incenſe Arcite heaps the fire:
Nor wanted hymns to Mars, or heathen charms:
At length the nodding ſtatue claſh'd his arms,
And with a ſullen ſound and feeble cry,
Half ſunk, and half pronounc'd the word of victory.
For this, with ſoul devout, he thank'd the God,
And, of ſucceſs ſecure, return'd to his abode.
Theſe vows thus granted, rais'd a ſtrive above,
Betwixt the God of war, and Queen of love.
She granting firſt, had right of time to plead;
But he had granted too, nor would recede.
Jove was for Venus; but he fear'd his wife,
And ſeem'd unwilling to decide the ſtrife;
Till Saturn from his leaden throne aroſe,
And found a way the difference to compoſe:
Though ſparing of his grace, to miſchief bent,
He ſeldom does a good with good intent.
Wayward, but wiſe; by long experience taught,
To pleaſe both parties, for ill ends, he ſought:
For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, tho' outrun.

By

By fortune he was now to Venus trin'd,
And with ſtern Mars in Capricorn was join'd:
Of him diſpoſing in his own abode,
He ſooth'd the Goddeſs, while he gull'd the God:
Ceaſe, daughter, to complain and ſtint the ſtrife;
Thy Palamon ſhall have his promis'd wife:
And Mars, the lord of conqueſt, in the fight
With palm and laurel ſhall adorn his knight.
Wide is my courſe, nor turn I to my place,
Till length of time, and move with tardy pace.
Man feels me, when I preſs th' etherial plains,
My hand is heavy, and the wound remains.
Mine is the ſhipwreck, in a watry ſign;
And in an earthy, the dark dungeon mine.
Cold ſhivering agues, melancholy care,
And bitter blaſting winds, and poiſon'd air,
Are mine, and wilful death, reſulting from deſpair.
The throtling quinſey 'tis my ſtar appoints,
And rheumatiſms aſcend to rack the joints:
When churls rebel againſt their native prince,
I arm their hands, and furniſh the pretence;
And houſing in the lion's hateful ſign,
Bought ſenates, and deſerting troops are mine.
Mine is the privy pois'ning; I command
Unkindly ſeaſons, and ungrateful land.
By me king's palaces are puſh'd to ground,
And miners cruſh'd beneath their mines are found.
'Twas I ſlew Sampſon, when the pillar'd hall
Fell down, and cruſh'd the many with the fall.
My looking is the fire of peſtilence,
That ſweeps at once the people and the prince.
Now weep no more, but truſt thy grandſire's art,
Mars ſhall be pleas'd, and thou perform thy part.
'Tis ill, tho' diff'rent your complexions are,
The family of Heav'n for men ſhou'd war.
Th' expedient pleas'd, where neither loſt his right;
Mars had the day, and Venus had the night.

The management they left to Chronos' care;
Now turn we to th' effect, and ſing the war.
In Athens all was pleaſure, mirth, and play,
All proper to the ſpring, and ſpritely May:
Which ev'ry ſoul inſpir'd with ſuch delight,
'Twas jeſting all the day, and love at night.
Heav'n ſmil'd, and gladded was the heart of man;
And Venus had the world as when it firſt began.
At length in ſleep their bodies they compoſe,
And dreamt the future fight, and early roſe.
Now ſcarce the dawning day began to ſpring,
As at a ſignal giv'n, the ſtreets with clamours ring:
At once the crowd aroſe; confus'd and high
Ev'n from the heav'n was heard a ſhouting cry;
For Mars was early up, and rous'd the ſky.
The Gods came downward to behold the wars,
Sharp'ning their ſights, and leaning from their ſtars.
The neighing of the gen'rous horſe was heard,
For battle by the buſy groom prepar'd:
Ruſtling of harneſs, rattling of the ſhield,
Clatt'ring of armour, furbiſh'd for the field.
Crowds to the caſtle mounted up the ſtreet,
Batt'ring the pavement with their courſer's feet:
The greedy ſight might there devour the gold
Of glitt'ring arms, too dazzling to behold:
And poliſh'd ſteel that caſt the view aſide,
And creſted morions, with their plumy pride.
Knights, with a long retinue of their ſquires,
In gaudy liv'ries march, and quaint attires.
One lac'd the helm, another held the lance:
A third the ſhining buckler did advance.
The courſer paw'd the ground with reſtleſs feet,
And ſnorting foam'd, and champ'd the golden bit.
The ſmiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands and hammers at their ſide,
And nails for looſen'd ſpears, and thongs for ſhields provide.

The yeomen guard the ſtreets, in ſeemly bands;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.
The trumpets, next the gate, in order plac'd,
Attend the ſign to ſound the martial blaſt:
The palace-yard is fill'd with floating tides,
And the laſt comers bear the former to the ſides.
The throng is in the midſt: the common crew
Shut out, the hall admits the better few;
In knots they ſtand, or in a rank they walk,
Serious in aſpect, earneſt in their talk:
Factious, and fav'ring this or t' other ſide,
As their ſtrong fancy or weak reaſon guide:
Their wagers back their wiſhes; numbers hold
With the fair freckled king, and beard of gold:
So vig'rous are his eyes, ſuch rays they caſt,
So prominent his eagle's beak is plac'd.
But moſt their looks on the black monarch bend,
His riſing muſcles, and his brawn commend;
His double-biting ax, and beamy ſpear,
Each aſking a gigantic force to rear.
All ſpoke as partial favour mov'd the mind;
And, ſafe themſelves, at other's coſt divin'd.
Wak'd by the cries, th' Athenian chief aroſe,
The knightly forms of combat to diſpoſe;
And paſſing through th' obſequious guards, he ſate
Conſpicuous on a throne, ſublime in ſtate;
There, for the two contending knights he ſent;
Arm'd cap-a-pee, with rev'rence low they bent;
He ſmil'd on both, and with ſuperior look
Alike their offer'd adoration took.
The people preſs on ev'ry ſide to ſee
Their awful prince, and hear his high decree.
Then ſigning to their heralds with his hand,
They gave his orders from their lofty ſtand.
Silence is thrice enjoin'd; then thus aloud
The king at arms beſpeaks the knights and liſtning crowd.

Our

Our ſovereign lord has ponder'd in his mind
The means to ſpare the blood of gentle kind;
And of his grace, and inborn clemency,
He modifies his firſt ſevere decree!
The keener edge of battle to rebate,
The troops for honour fighting, not for hate.
He wills, not death ſhould terminate their ſtrife;
And wounds, if wounds enſue, be ſhort of life:
But iſſues, ere the fight, his dread command,
That ſlings afar, and poniards hand to hand,
Be baniſh'd from the field; that none ſhall dare
With ſhortned ſword to ſtab in cloſer war;
But in fair combat fight with manly ſtrength,
Nor puſh with biting point, but ſtrike at length,
The tourney is allow'd but one career,
Of the tough aſh, with the ſharp-grinded ſpear,
But knights unhors'd may riſe from off the plain,
And fight on foot their honour to regain;
Nor if at miſchief taken, on the ground
Be ſlain, but pris'ners to the pillar bound,
At either barrier plac'd; nor (captives made,)
Be freed, or arm'd anew the fight invade.
The chief of either ſide, bereft of life,
Or yielded to his foe, concludes the ſtrife.
Thus dooms the lord: now valiant knights and young,
Fight each his fill with ſwords and maces long.
The herald ends: the vaulted firmament
With loud acclaims and vaſt applauſe is rent:
Heav'n guard a prince ſo gracious and ſo good,
So juſt, and yet ſo provident of blood!
This was the gen'ral cry. The trumpets ſound,
And warlike ſymphony is heard around.
The marching troops thro' Athens take their way,
The great earl-marſhal orders their array.
The fair from high the paſſing pomp behold;
A rain of flow'rs is from the windows roll'd.

The

The caſements are with golden tiſſue ſpread,
And horſes hoofs, for earth, on ſilken tap'ſtry tread,
The king goes midmoſt, and the rivals ride
In equal rank, and cloſe his either ſide.
Next after theſe, there rode the royal wife,
With Emily, the cauſe, and the reward of ſtrife.
The following cavalcade, by three and three,
Proceed by titles marſhall'd in degree.
Thus thro' the ſouthern gate they take their way,
And at the liſt arriv'd ere prime of day.
There, parting from the king, the chiefs divide,
And wheeling Eaſt and Weſt, before their many ride.
Th' Athenian monarch mounts his throne on high,
And after him the queen and Emily:
Next theſe, the kindred of the crown are grac'd
With nearer ſeats, and lords by ladies plac'd.
Scarce were they ſeated, when with clamours loud
In ruſh'd at once a rude promiſcuous crowd:
The guards, and then each other overbear,
And in a moment throng the ſpacious theatre.
Now chang'd the jarring noiſe to whiſpers low,
As winds forſaking ſeas more ſoftly blow;
When at the weſtern gate, on which the car
Is plac'd aloft, that bears the God of war,
Proud Arcite entring arm'd before his train,
Stops at the barrier, and divides the plain.
Red was his banner, and diſplay'd abroad
The bloody colours of his patron God.
At that ſelf moment enters Palamon
The gate of Venus, and the riſing-ſun;
Wav'd by the wanton winds, his banner flies,
All maiden white, and ſhares the people's eyes.
From Eaſt to Weſt, look all the world around,
Two troops ſo match'd were never to be found;
Such bodies built for ſtrength, of equal age,
In ſtature ſiz'd; ſo proud an equipage:

The

The niceſt eye could no diſtinction make,
Where lay th' advantage, or what ſide to take.
Thus rang'd, the herald for the laſt proclaims
A ſilence, while they anſwer'd to their names:
For ſo the king decreed, to ſhun the care,
The fraud of muſters falſe, the common bane of war.
The tale was juſt, and then the gates were clos'd;
And chief to chief, and troop to troop oppos'd.
The heralds laſt retir'd, and loudly cry'd,
The fortune of the field be fairly try'd.
At this, the challenger with fierce defy
His trumpet ſounds; the challeng'd makes reply:
With clangor rings the field, reſounds the vaulted ſky.
Their vizors clos'd, their lances in the reſt,
Or at the helmet pointed, or the creſt;
They vaniſh from the barrier, ſpeed the race,
And ſpurring ſee decreaſe the middle ſpace.
A cloud of ſmoke envelops either hoſt,
And all at once the combatants are loſt:
Darkling they join adverſe, and ſhock unſeen,
Courſers with courſers juſtling, men with men:
As lab'ring in eclipſe, a while they ſtay,
Till the next blaſt of wind reſtores the day.
They look anew: the beauteous form of fight
Is chang'd, and war appears a grizly ſight.
Two troops in fair array one moment ſhow'd,
The next, a field with fall'n bodies ſtrow'd:
Not half the number in their ſeats are found;
But men and ſteeds lie grov'ling on the ground.
The points of ſpears are ſtuck within the ſhield,
The ſteeds without their riders ſcour the field.
The knights unhors'd, on foot renew the fight;
The glitt'ring fauchions caſt a gleaming light:
Hauberks and helms are hew'd with many a wound
Out ſpins the ſtreaming blood and dies the ground.
The mighty maces with ſuch haſte deſcend,
They break the bones, and make the ſolid armour bend.

This thruſts amid the throng with furious force;
Down goes, at once, the horſeman and the horſe:
That courſer ſtumbles on the fallen ſteed,
And floundring throws the rider o'er his head.
One rolls along, a foot-ball to his foes;
One with a broken truncheon deals his blows.
This halting, this diſabled with his wound,
In triumph led, is to the pillar bound,
Where by the king's award he muſt abide:
There goes a captive led on t'other ſide.
By fits they ceaſe; and leaning on the lance,
Take breath a while, and to new fight advance.
Full oft the rivals met, and neither ſpar'd
His utmoſt force, and each forgot to ward.
The head of this was to the ſaddle bent,
The other backward to the crupper ſent:
Both were by turns unhors'd; the jealous blows
Fall thick and heavy, when on foot they cloſe.
So deep their fauchions bite, that ev'ry ſtroke
Pierc'd to the quick; and equal wounds they gave and took.
Borne far aſunder by the tides of men,
Like adamant and ſteel they meet agen.
So when a tiger ſucks the bullock's blood,
A famiſh'd lion iſſuing from the wood
Roars lordly fierce, and challenges the food.
Each claims poſſeſſion, neither will obey,
But both their paws are faſten'd on the prey;
They bite, they tear; and while in vain they ſtrive,
The ſwains come arm'd between, and both to diſtance drive.
At length, as fate foredoom'd, and all things tend
By courſe of time to their appointed end;
So when the ſun to Weſt was far declin'd,
And both afreſh in mortal battle join'd,
The ſtrong Emetrius came in Arcite's aid,
And Palamon with odds was overlaid:

For turning ſhort, he ſtruck with all his might
Full on the helmet of th' unwary knight.
Deep was the wound; he ſtagger'd with the blow,
And turn'd him to his unexpected foe;
Whom with ſuch force he ſtruck, he fell'd him down,
And cleft the circle of his golden crown.
But Arcite's men, who now prevail'd in fight,
Twice ten at once ſurround the ſingle knight:
O'erpower'd, at length, they force him to the ground,
Unyielded as he was, and to the pillar bound;
And king Lycurgus, while he fought in vain
His friend to free, was tumbled on the plain.
Who now laments but Palamon, compell'd
No more to try the fortune of the field!
And worſe than death, to view with hateful eyes
His rival's conqueſt, and renounce the prize!
The royal judge on his tribunal plac'd,
Who had beheld the fight from firſt to laſt,
Bad ceaſe the war; pronouncing from on high,
Arcite of Thebes had won the beauteous Emily.
The ſound of trumpets to the voice reply'd,
And round the royal liſts the heralds cry'd
Arcite of Thebes has won the beauteous bride.
The people rend the ſkies with vaſt applauſe;
All own the chief, when fortune owns the cauſe.
Arcite is own'd ev'n by the Gods above,
And conq'ring Mars inſults the Queen of love.
So laugh'd he, when the rightful Titan fail'd,
And Jove's uſurping arms in heav'n prevail'd.
Laugh'd all the powers who favour tyranny;
And all the ſtanding army of the ſky.
But Venus with dejected eyes appears,
And weeping on the liſts diſtill'd her tears;
Her will refus'd, which grieves a woman moſt,
And, in her champion foil'd, the cauſe of Love is loſt.
Till Saturn ſaid, Fair daughter, now be ſtill,
The bluſtring fool has ſatisfy'd his will;

His boon is giv'n; his knight has gain'd the day,
But loſt the prize, th' arrears are yet to pay.
Thy hour is come, and mine the care ſhall be
To pleaſe thy knight, and ſet thy promiſe free.
Now while the heralds run the liſts around,
And Arcite, Arcite, heaven and earth reſound;
A miracle (nor leſs it could be call'd)
Their joy with unexpected ſorrow pall'd.
The victor knight had laid his helm aſide,
Part for his eaſe, the greater part for pride:
Bare-headed, popularly low he bow'd,
And paid the ſalutations of the crowd.
Then ſpurring at full ſpeed, ran endlong on
Where Theſeus ſate on his imperial throne;
Furious he drove, and upward caſt his eye,
Where next the queen was plac'd his Emily;
Then paſſing to the ſaddle-bow he bent:
A ſweet regard the gracious virgin lent;
(For women, to the brave an eaſy prey,
Still follow fortune where ſhe leads the way:)
Juſt then, from earth ſprung out a flaſhing fire,
By Pluto ſent, at Saturn's bad deſire:
The ſtartling ſteed was ſeiz'd with ſudden fright,
And, bounding, o'er the pommel caſt the knight:
Forward he flew, and pitching on his head,
He quiver'd with his feet, and lay for dead.
Black was his count'nance in a little ſpace,
For all the blood was gather'd in his face.
Help was at hand: they rear'd him from the ground,
And from his cumbrous arms his limbs unbound;
Then lanc'd a vein, and watch'd returning breath;
It came, but clogg'd with ſymptoms of his death.
The ſaddle-bow the noble parts had preſt,
All bruis'd and mortify'd his manly breaſt.
Him ſtill entranc'd, and in a litter laid,
They bore from field, and to his bed convey'd.

At length he wak'd, and with a feeble cry,
The word he firſt pronounc'd was Emily.
Mean time the king, tho' inwardly he mourn'd,
In pomp triumphant to the town return'd,
Attended by the chiefs, who fought the field;
(Now friendly mix'd, and in one troop compell'd.)
Compos'd his looks to counterfeited cheer,
And bade them not for Arcite's life to fear.
But that which gladded all the warrior train,
Tho' moſt were ſorely wounded, none were ſlain.
The ſurgeons ſoon deſpoil'd 'em of their arms,
And ſome with ſalves they cure, and ſome with charms;
Foment the bruiſes, and the pains aſſwage,
And heal their inward hurts with ſov'reign draughts of ſage.
The king in perſon viſits all around,
Comforts the ſick, congratulates the ſound:
Honours the princely chiefs, rewards the reſt,
And holds for thrice three days a royal feaſt.
None was diſgrac'd; for falling is no ſhame;
And cowardice alone is loſs of fame.
The vent'rous knight is from the ſaddle thrown;
But 'tis the fault of fortune, not his own,
If crowds and palms the conqu'ring ſide adorn.
The victor under better ſtars was born:
The brave man ſeeks not popular applauſe,
Nor overpower'd with arms deſerts his cauſe;
Unſham'd, tho' foil'd, he does the beſt he can;
Force is of brutes, but honour is of man.
Thus Theſeus ſmil'd on all with equal grace;
And each was ſet according to his place,
With eaſe were reconcil'd the diff'ring parts,
For envy never dwells in noble hearts.
At length they took their leave, the time expir'd;
Well pleas'd, and to their ſev'ral homes retir'd.
Mean while the health of Arcite ſtill impairs;
From bad proceeds to worſe, and mocks the leeches cares;

Swoln

Swoln is his breaſt; his inward pains increaſe,
All means are us'd, and all without ſucceſs.
The clotted blood lies heavy on his heart,
Corrupts and there remains in ſpite of art:
Nor breathing veins, nor cupping will prevail;
All outward remedies and inward fail:
The mold of nature's fabric is deſtroy'd,
Her veſſels diſcompos'd, her virtue void:
The bellows of his lungs begin to ſwell:
All out of frame is ev'ry ſecret cell,
Nor can the good receive, nor bad expel.
Thoſe breathing organs thus within oppreſt,
With venom ſoon diſtend the ſinews of his breaſt.
Nought profits him to ſave abandon'd life,
Nor vomit's upward aid, nor downward laxative.
The midmoſt region batter'd and deſtroy'd,
When nature cannot work, th' effect of art is void.
For phyſic can but mend our crazy ſtate,
Patch an old building, not a new create.
Arcite is doom'd to die in all his pride,
Muſt leave his youth, and yield his beauteous bride,
Gain'd hardly, againſt right, and unenjoy'd.
When 'twas declar'd all hope of life was paſt,
Conſcience (that of all phyſic works the laſt)
Caus'd him to ſend for Emily in haſte.
With her, at his deſire, came Palamon;
Then on his pillow rais'd, he thus begun.
No language can expreſs the ſmalleſt part
Of what I feel, and ſuffer in my heart
For you, whom beſt I love and value moſt;
But to your ſervice I bequeath my ghoſt;
Which from this mortal body when unty'd,
Unſeen, unheard, ſhall hover at your ſide;
Nor fright you waking, nor your ſleep offend,
But wait officious, and your ſteps attend:

How I have lov'd, excuſe my fal'tring tongue,
My ſpirits feeble, and my pains are ſtrong:
This I may ſay, I only grieve to die
Becauſe I loſe my charming Emily:
To die, when Heav'n had put you in my pow'r,
Fate could not chuſe a more malicious hour!
What greater curſe could envious fortune give,
Than juſt to die, when I began to live!
Vain men, how vaniſhing a bliſs we crave,
Now warm in love, now with'ring in the grave!
Never, O never more to ſee the ſun!
Still dark, in a damp vault, and ſtill alone!
This fate is common; but I loſe my breath
Near bliſs, and yet not bleſs'd before my death.
Farewel; but take me dying in your arms,
'Tis all I can enjoy of all your charms:
This hand I cannot but in death reſign;
Ah! could I live! but while I live 'tis mine.
I feel my end approach, and thus embrac'd,
Am pleas'd to die; but hear me ſpeak my laſt,
Ah! my ſweet foe, for you, and you alone,
I broke my faith with injur'd Palamon.
But love the ſenſe of right and wrong confounds,
Strong love and proud ambition have no bounds.
And much I doubt ſhould Heav'n my life prolong,
I ſhould return to juſtify my wrong:
For while my former flames remain within,
Repentance is but want of pow'r to ſin.
With mortal hatred I purſu'd his life,
Nor he, nor you, were guilty of the ſtrife;
Nor I, but as I lov'd; yet all combin'd,
Your beauty, and my impotence of mind;
And his concurrent flame, that blew my fire:
For ſtill our kindred ſouls had one deſire.
He had a moment's right in point of time;
Had I ſeen firſt, then his had been the crime.

Fate

Fate made it mine, and juſtify'd his right;
Nor holds this earth a more deſerving knight,
For virtue, valour, and for noble blood,
Truth, honour, all that is compriz'd in good;
So help me Heav'n, in all the world is none
So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon.
He loves you too, with ſuch an holy fire,
As will not, cannot but with life expire:
Our vow'd affections both have often try'd,
Nor any love but yours could ours divide.
Then by my love's inviolable band,
By my long ſuff'ring, and my ſhort command,
If e'er you plight your vows when I am gone,
Have pity on the faithful Palamon.
This was his laſt; for death came on amain,
And exercis'd below his iron reign;
Then upward to the ſeat of life he goes:
Senſe fled before him, what he touch'd he froze;
Yet could he not his cloſing eyes withdraw,
Though leſs and leſs of Emily he ſaw;
So, ſpeechleſs, for a little ſpace he lay;
Then graſp'd the hand he held, and ſigh'd his ſoul away.
But whither went his ſoul, let ſuch relate
Who ſearch the ſecrets of the future ſtate:
Divines can ſay but what themſelves believe;
Strong proofs they have, but not demonſtrative:
For, were all plain, then all ſides muſt agree,
And faith itſelf be loſt in certainty.
To live uprightly then is ſure the beſt,
To ſave ourſelves, and not to damn the reſt.
The ſoul of Arcite went where heathens go,
Who better live than we, tho' leſs they know.
In Palamon a manly grief appears;
Silent, he wept, aſham'd to ſhew his tears:
Emilia ſhriek'd but once, and then, oppreſs'd
With ſorrow, ſunk upon her lover's breaſt:

Till Theſeus in his arms convey'd with care,
Far from ſo ſad a ſight, the ſwooning fair.
'Twere loſs of time her ſorrow to relate;
Ill bears the ſex a youthful lover's fate,
When juſt approaching to the nuptial ſtate.
But like a low-hung cloud, it rains ſo faſt,
That all at once it falls, and cannot laſt.
The face of things is chang'd, and Athens now,
That laugh'd ſo late, becomes the ſcene of woe:
Matrons and maids, both ſexes, ev'ry ſtate,
With tears lament the knight's untimely fate.
Nor greater grief in falling Troy was ſeen
For Hector's death; but Hector was not then.
Old men with duſt deform'd their hoary hair,
The women beat their breaſts, their cheeks they tare.
Why wou'dſt thou go, with one conſent they cry
When thou hadſt gold enough, and Emily.
Theſeus himſelf, who ſhould have cheer'd the grief
Of others, wanted now the ſame relief,
Old Egeus only could revive his ſon,
Who various changes of the world had known:
And ſtrange viciſſitudes of human fate,
Still alt'ring, never in a ſteady ſtate;
Good after ill, and after pain, delight;
Alternate like the ſcenes of day and night:
Since ev'ry man, who lives, is born to die,
And none can boaſt ſincere felicity,
With equal mind, what happens, let us bear,
Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond our care.
Like pilgrims to th' appointed place we tend;
The world's an inn, and death the journey's end.
Ev'n kings but play; and when their part is done,
Some other, worſe or better, mount the throne.
With words like theſe the crowd was ſatisfy'd,
And ſo they would have been, had Theſeus dy'd.

But

But he, their king, was lab'ring in his mind,
A fitting place for fun'ral pomps to find,
Which were in honour of the dead deſign'd.
And after long debate, at laſt he found
(As love itſelf had mark'd the ſpot of ground)
That grove for ever green, that conſcious lawnd,
Where he with Palamon fought hand to hand:
That where he fed his amorous deſires
With ſoft complaints, and felt his hotteſt fires,
There other flames might waſte his earthly part,
And burn his limbs, where love had burn'd his heart.
This once reſolv'd, the peaſants were enjoin'd
Sere-wood, and firs, and dodder'd oaks to find.
With ſounding axes to the grove they go,
Fell, ſplit, and lay the fuel on a row,
Vulcanian food: a bier is next prepar'd,
On which the lifeleſs body ſhould be rear'd,
Cover'd with cloth of gold, on which was laid
The corpſe of Arcite, in like robes array'd.
White gloves were on his hands, and on his head
A wreath of laurel, mix'd with myrtle ſpread.
A ſword keen-edg'd within his right he held,
The warlike emblem of the conquer'd field:
Bare was his manly viſage on the bier:
Menac'd his count'nance; ev'n in death ſevere.
Then to the palace-hall they bore the knight,
To lie in ſolemn ſtate, a public ſight.
Groans, cries, and howlings fill the crowded place,
And unaffected ſorrow ſat on ev'ry face.
Sad Palamon above the reſt appears,
In ſable garments, dew'd with guſhing tears:
His auburn locks on either ſhoulder flow'd,
Which to the fun'ral of his friend he vow'd:
But Emily, as chief, was next his ſide,
A virgin-widow, and a mourning bride.

And that the princely obſequies might be
Perform'd according to his high degree,
The ſteed, that bore him living to the fight,
Was trapp'd with poliſh'd ſteel, all ſhining bright,
And cover'd with th' atchievements of the knight.
The riders rode abreaſt, and one his ſhield,
His lance of cornel-wood another held;
The third his bow, and, glorious to behold,
The coſtly quiver, all of burniſh'd gold.
The nobleſt of the Grecians next appear,
And, weeping, on their ſhoulders bore the bier;
With ſober pace they march'd, and often ſtaid,
And thro' the maſter-ſtreet the corpſe convey'd.
The houſes to their tops with black were ſpread,
And ev'n the pavements were with mourning hid.
The right ſide of the pall old Egeus kept,
And on the left the royal Theſeus wept;
Each bore a golden bowl of work divine,
With honey fill'd, and milk, and mix'd with ruddy wine.
Then Palamon, the kinſman of the ſlain,
And after him appear'd th' illuſtrious train.
To grace the pomp, came Emily the bright,
With cover'd fire, the fun'ral pile to light.
With high devotion was the ſervice made,
And all the rites of pagan-honour paid:
So lofty was the pile, a Parthian bow,
With vigour drawn, muſt ſend the ſhaft below.
The bottom was full twenty fathom broad,
With crackling ſtraw beneath in due proportion ſtrow'd.
The fabric ſeem'd a wood of riſing green,
With ſulphur and bitumen caſt between,
To feed the flames: the trees were unctuous fir,
And mountain-aſh, the mother of the ſpear;
The mourner-yew, and builder oak were there:
The beech, the ſwimming alder, and the plane,
Hard box, and linden of a ſofter grain,
And laurels, which the Gods for conqu'ring chiefs ordain.

How they were rank'd, ſhall reſt untold by me,
With nameleſs nymphs that liv'd in ev'ry tree;
Nor how the dryads, or the woodland train,
Diſherited, ran howling o'er the plain:
Nor how the birds to foreign ſeats repair'd,
Or beaſts, that bolted out, and ſaw the foreſt bar'd:
Nor how the ground now clear'd, with ghaſtly fright
Beheld the ſudden ſun, a ſtranger to the light.
The ſtraw, as firſt I ſaid, was laid below:
Of chips and ſere-wood was the ſecond row;
The third of greens, and timber newly fell'd;
The fourth high ſtage the fragrant odours held,
And pearls, and precious ſtones, and rich array;
In midſt of which, embalm'd the body lay.
The ſervice ſung, the maid with mourning eyes
The ſtubble fir'd; the ſmouldring flames ariſe:
This office done, ſhe ſunk upon the ground;
But what ſhe ſpoke, recover'd from her ſwoon,
I want the wit in moving words to dreſs;
But by themſelves the tender ſex may gueſs.
While the devouring fire was burning faſt,
Rich jewels in the flame the wealthy caſt;
And ſome their ſhields, and ſome their lances threw,
And gave their warrior's ghoſt a warrior's due.
Full bowls of wine, of honey, milk, and blood
Were pour'd upon the pile of burning wood,
And hiſſing flames receive, and hungry lick the food.
Then thrice the mounted ſquadrons ride around
The fire, and Arcite's name they thrice reſound:
Hail, and farewel, they ſhouted thrice amain,
Thrice facing to the left, and thrice they turn'd again:
Still as they turn'd, they beat their clatt'ring ſhields;
The women mix their cries; and clamour fills the fields.
The warlike wakes continu'd all the night,
And fun'ral games were play'd at new returning light;
Who naked wreſtled beſt, beſmear'd with oil,
Or who with gauntlets gave or took the foil,

I will not tell you, nor wou'd you attend;
But briefly haſte to my long ſtory's end.
I paſs the reſt; the year was fully mourn'd,
And Palamon long ſince to Thebes return'd:
When by the Grecians' general conſent,
At Athens Theſeus held his parliament:
Among the laws that paſs'd, it was decreed,
That conquer'd Thebes from bondage ſhould be freed;
Reſerving homage to th' Athenian throne,
To which the ſov'reign ſummon'd Palamon.
Unknowing of the cauſe, he took his way,
Mournful in mind, and ſtill in black array.
The monarch mounts the throne, and, plac'd on high,
Commands into the court the beauteous Emily:
So call'd, ſhe came; the ſenate roſe, and paid
Becoming rev'rence to the royal maid.
And firſt ſoft whiſpers thro' th' aſſembly went:
With ſilent wonder then they watch'd th' event:
All huſh'd, the king aroſe with awful grace,
Deep thought was in his breaſt, and counſel in his face.
At length he ſigh'd; and having firſt prepar'd
Th' attentive audience, thus his will declar'd.
The Cauſe and ſpring of motion, from above,
Hung down on earth the golden chain of love:
Great was th' effect, and high was his intent,
When peace among the jarring ſeeds he ſent.
Fire, flood, and earth, and air by this were bound,
And Love, the common link, the new creation crown'd.
The chain ſtill holds; for tho' the forms decay,
Eternal matter never wears away:
The ſame firſt mover certain bounds has plac'd,
How long thoſe periſhable forms ſhall laſt:
Nor can they laſt beyond the time aſſign'd
By that all-ſeeing, and all-making mind:
Shorten their hours they may; for will is free;
But never paſs th' appointed deſtiny.

So

So men oppreſs'd, when weary of their breath,
Throw off the burden, and ſuborn their death.
Then ſince thoſe forms begin, and have their end,
On ſome unalter'd cauſe they ſure depend:
Parts of the whole are we; but God the whole;
Who gives us life, and animating ſoul.
For nature cannot from a part derive
That being, which the whole can only give:
He perfect, ſtable; but imperfect we,
Subject to change, and diff'rent in degree;
Plants, beaſts, and man; and as our organs are
We more or leſs of his perfection ſhare.
But by a long deſcent, th' etherial fire
Corrupts; and forms, the mortal part, expire:
As he withdraws his virtue, ſo they paſs,
And the ſame matter makes another maſs:
This law th' Omniſcient pow'r was pleas'd to give,
That ev'ry kind ſhould by ſucceſſion live:
That individuals die, his will ordains;
The propagated ſpecies ſtill remains.
The monarch oak, the patriarch of the trees,
Shoots riſing up, and ſpreads by ſlow degrees;
Three centuries he grows, and three he ſtays,
Supreme in ſtate, and in three more decays;
So wears the paving pebble in the ſtreet,
And towns and tow'rs their fatal periods meet:
So rivers, rapid once, now naked lie,
Forſaken of their ſprings; and leave their channels dry.
So man, at firſt a drop, dilates with heat,
Then, form'd the little heart begins to beat;
Secret he feeds, unknowing in the cell;
At length, for hatching ripe, he breaks the ſhell,
And ſtruggles into breath, and cries for aid;
Then, helpleſs, in his mother's lap is laid.
He creeps, he walks, and iſſuing into man,
Grudges their life, from whence his own began:

Retchleſs

Retchleſs of laws, affects to rule alone,
Anxious to reign, and reſtleſs on the throne:
Firſt vegetive, then ſeels, and reaſons laſt;
Rich of three ſouls, and lives all three to waſte.
Some thus; but thouſands more in flow'r of age:
For few arrive to run the latter ſtage.
Sunk in the firſt, in battle ſome are ſlain,
And others whelm'd beneath the ſtormy main.
What makes all this, but Jupiter the king,
At whoſe command we periſh, and we ſpring?
Then 'tis our beſt, ſince thus ordain'd to die,
To make a virtue of neceſſity.
Take what he gives, ſince to rebel is vain;
The bad grows better, which we well ſuſtain;
And could we chuſe the time, and chuſe aright,
'Tis beſt to die, our honour at the height.
When we have done our anceſtors no ſhame,
But ſerv'd our friends, and well ſecur'd our fame;
Then ſhould we wiſh our happy life to cloſe,
And leave no more for fortune to diſpoſe:
So ſhould we make our death a glad relief
From future ſhame, from ſickneſs, and from grief:
Enjoying while we live the preſent hour,
And dying in our excellence and flow'r.
Then round our death-bed ev'ry friend ſhould run,
And joyous of our conqueſt early won:
While the malicious world with envious tears
Shou'd grudge our happy end, and wiſh it theirs.
Since then our Arcite is with honour dead,
Why ſhou'd we mourn, that he ſo ſoon is freed,
Or call untimely, what the Gods decreed?
With grief as juſt, a friend may be deplor'd,
From a foul priſon to free air reſtor'd.
Ought he to thank his kinſman or his wife,
Cou'd tears recall him into wretched life?
Their ſorrow hurts themſelves; on him is loſt;
And worſe than both, offends his happy ghoſt.

What then remains, but, after paſt annoy,
To take the good viciſſitude of joy?
To thank the gracious Gods for what they give,
Poſſeſs our ſouls, and while we live, to live?
Ordain we then two ſorrows to combine,
And in one point th' extremes of grief to join;
That thence reſulting joy may be renew'd,
As jarring notes in harmony conclude.
Then I propoſe that Palamon ſhall be
In marriage join'd with beauteous Emily;
For which already I have gain'd th' aſſent
Of my free people in full parliament.
Long love to her has born the faithful knight,
And well deſerv'd, had fortune done him right:
'Tis time to mend her fault; ſince Emily
By Arcite's death from former vows is free:
If you, fair ſiſter, ratify th' accord,
And take him for your huſband, and your lord,
'Tis no diſhonour to confer your grace
On one deſcended from a royal race:
And were he leſs, yet years of ſervice paſt
From grateful ſouls exact reward at laſt:
Pity is heav'n's and your's; nor can ſhe find
A throne ſo ſoft as in a woman's mind.
He ſaid; ſhe bluſh'd; and as o'er-aw'd by might,
Seem'd to give Theſeus what ſhe gave the knight.
Then turning to the Theban thus he ſaid;
Small arguments are needful to perſuade
Your temper to comply with my command;
And ſpeaking thus, he gave Emilia's hand.
Smil'd Venus, to behold her own true knight
Obtain the conqueſt, tho' he loſt the fight;
And bleſs'd with nuptial bliſs the ſweet laborious night.
Eros, and Anteros, on either ſide,
One fir'd the bridegroom, and one warm'd the bride;

And

And long-attending Hymen from above,
Show'r'd on the bed the whole Idalian grove.
All of a tenor was their after-life,
No day diſcolour'd with domeſtic ſtrife;
No jealouſy, but mutual truth believ'd,
Secure repoſe, and kindneſs undeceiv'd.
Thus Heav'n, beyond the compaſs of his thought,
Sent him the bleſſing he ſo dearly bought.
So may the Queen of love long duty bleſs,
And all true lovers find the ſame ſucceſs.

THE

THE

COCK and the FOX:

OR, THE

TALE of the NUN's PRIEST.

THERE liv'd, as authors tell, in days of yore,
A widow ſomewhat old, and very poor:
Deep in a cell her cottage lonely ſtood,
Well thatch'd, and under covert of a wood.
This dowager, on whom my tale I found,
Since laſt ſhe laid her huſband in the ground,
A ſimple ſober life, in patience, led,
And had but juſt enough to buy her bread:
But huſwifing the little Heav'n had lent,
She duly paid a groat for quarter rent;
And pinch'd her belly, with her daughters two,
To bring the year about with much ado.
The cattle in her homeſtead were three ſows,
An ewe call'd Mally, and three brinded cows.
Her parlour-window ſtuck with herbs around,
Of ſav'ry ſmell; and ruſhes ſtrew'd the ground.
A maple-dreſſer in her hall ſhe had,
On which full many a ſlender meal ſhe made;
For no delicious morſel paſs'd her throat;
According to her cloth ſhe cut her coat:
No poynant ſauce ſhe knew, nor coſtly treat,
Her hunger gave a reliſh to her meat:
A ſparing diet did her health aſſure;
Or ſick, a pepper poſſet was her cure.

Before

Before the day was done, her work ſhe ſped,
And never went by candle light to bed:
With exerciſe ſhe ſweat ill humours out,
Her dancing was not hinder'd by the gout.
Her poverty was glad; her heart content,
Nor knew ſhe what the ſpleen or vapours meant.
Of wine ſhe never taſted through the year,
But white and black was all her homely chear:
Brown bread, and milk, (but firſt ſhe ſkim'd her bowls)
And raſhers of ſing'd bacon on the coals.
On holy days an egg, or two at moſt;
But her ambition never reach'd to roaſt.
A yard ſhe had with pales enclos'd about,
Some high, ſome low, and a dry ditch without.
Within this homeſtead, liv'd, without a peer,
For crowing loud, the noble Chanticleer;
So hight her cock, whoſe ſinging did ſurpaſs
The merry notes of organs at the maſs.
More certain was the crowing of the cock
To number hours, than is an abbey-clock;
And ſooner than the mattin-bell was rung,
He clap'd his wings upon his rooſt, and ſung:
For when degrees fifteen aſcended right,
By ſure inſtinct he knew 'twas one at night.
High was his comb, and coral-red withal,
In dents embattell'd like a caſtle wall;
His bill was raven-black, and ſhone like jet;
Blue were his legs, and orient were his feet:
White were his nails, like ſilver to behold,
His body glitt'ring like the burniſh'd gold.
This gentle cock, for ſolace of his life
Six miſſes had, beſides his lawful wife;
Scandal that ſpares no king, tho' ne'er ſo good,
Says, they were all of his own fleſh and blood,
His ſiſters both by ſire and mother's ſide;
And ſure their likeneſs ſhow'd them near ally'd.

But make the worſt, the monarch did no more,
Than all the Ptolemys had done before:
When inceſt is for intereſt of a nation,
'Tis made no ſin by holy diſpenſation.
Some lines have been maintain'd by this alone,
Which by their common uglineſs are known.
But paſſing this as from our tale apart,
Dame Partlet was the ſovereign of his heart:
Ardent in love, outrageous in his play,
He feather'd her a hundred times a day:
And ſhe that was not only paſſing fair,
But was withal diſcreet, and debonair,
Reſolv'd the paſſive doctrine to fulfil,
Tho' loth; and let him work his wicked will:
At board and bed was affable and kind,
According as their marriage-vow did bind,
And as the church's precept had injoin'd.
Ev'n ſince ſhe was a ſennight old, they ſay,
Was chaſte and humble to her dying day,
Nor chick nor hen was known to diſobey.
By this her huſband's heart ſhe did obtain;
What cannot beauty, join'd with virtue, gain!
She was his only joy, and he her pride,
She, when he walk'd, went pecking by his ſide;
If ſpurning up the ground, he ſprung a corn,
The tribute in his bill to her was born.
But oh! what joy it was to hear him ſing
In ſummer, when the day began to ſpring,
Stretching his neck, and warbling in his throat,
Solus cum ſola, then was all his note.
For in the days of yore, the birds of parts
Were bred to ſpeak, and ſing, and learn the lib'ral arts.
It happ'd that perching on the parlour-beam
Amidſt his wives, he had a deadly dream,
Juſt at the dawn; and ſigh'd, and groan'd ſo faſt,
As ev'ry breath he drew would be his laſt.

Dame Partlet, ever neareſt to his ſide,
Heard all his piteous moan, and how he cry'd
For help from Gods and men: and ſore aghait
She peck'd and pull'd, and waken'd him at laſt.
Dear heart, ſaid ſhe, for love of Heav'n declare
Your pain, and make me partner in your care.
You groan, Sir, ever ſince the morning-light,
As ſomething had diſturb'd your noble ſpright.
And madam, well I might, ſaid Chanticleer,
Never was ſhrovetide-cock in ſuch a fear.
Ev'n ſtill I run all over in a ſweat,
My princely ſenſes not recover'd yet.
For ſuch a dream I had of dire portent,
That much I fear my body will be ſhent:
It bodes I ſhall have wars and woful ſtrife,
Or in a loathſome dungeon end my life.
Know, dame, I dreamt within my troubled breaſt,
That in our yard I ſaw a murd'rous beaſt,
That on my body would have made arreſt.
With waking eyes I ne'er beheld his fellow;
His colour was betwixt a red and yellow:
Tipp'd was his tail, and both his pricking ears
Were black; and much unlike his other hairs:
The reſt in ſhape a beagle's whelp throughout,
With broader forehead, and a ſharper ſnout:
Deep in his front were ſunk his glowing eyes,
That yet methinks I ſee him with ſurprize.
Reach out your hand, I drop with clammy ſweat,
And lay it to my heart, and feel it beat.
Now fy for ſhame, quoth ſhe, by Heav'n above,
Thou haſt for ever loſt thy lady's love;
No woman can endure a recreant knight,
He muſt be bold by day, and free by night:
Our ſex deſires a huſband or a friend,
Who can our honour and his own defend;
Wiſe, hardy, ſecret, lib'ral of his purſe:
A fool is nauſeous, but a coward worſe:

No bragging coxcomb, yet no baffled knight.
How dar'ſt thou talk of love, and dar'ſt not fight?
How dar'ſt thou tell thy dame thou art affear'd?
Haſt thou no manly heart, and haſt a beard?
If ought from fearful dreams may be divin'd,
They ſignify a cock of dunghill kind.
All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from repletion and complexion bred;
From riſing fumes of indigeſted food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood:
And ſure, my lord, if I can read aright,
Theſe fooliſh fancies, you have had to-night,
Are certain ſymptoms (in the canting ſtile)
Of boiling choler, and abounding bile;
This yellow gaul that in your ſtomach floats,
Engenders all theſe viſionary thoughts.
When choler overflows then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beaſts in ſleep we view,
For humours are diſtinguiſh'd by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And waſps and hornets with their double wings.
Choler aduſt congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toſs us, and black devils tear.
In ſanguine airy dreams aloft we bound,
With rheums oppreſs'd we ſink in rivers drown'd.
More I could ſay, but thus conclude my theme,
The dominating humour makes the dream.
Cato was in his time accounted wiſe,
And he condemns them all for empty lies.
Take my advice, and when we fly to ground,
With laxatives preſerve your body ſound,
And purge the pecant humours that abound.
I ſhould be loth to lay you on a bier;
And tho' there lives no 'pothecary near,

I dare for once preſcribe for your diſeaſe,
And ſave long bills, and a damn'd doctor's fees.
Two ſov'reign herbs which I by practice know,
And both at hand, (for in our yard they grow;)
On peril of my ſoul ſhall rid you wholly
Of yellow choler, and of melancholy:
You muſt both purge, and vomit; but obey,
And for the love of heav'n make no delay.
Since hot and dry in your complexion join,
Beware the ſun when in a vernal ſign;
For when he mounts exalted in the ram,
If then he finds your body in a flame,
Replete with choler, I dare lay a groat,
A tertian ague is at leaſt your lot.
Perhaps a fever (which the Gods forefend)
May bring your youth to ſome untimely end:
And therefore, Sir, as you deſire to live,
A day or two before your laxative,
Take juſt three worms, nor under nor above,
Becauſe the Gods unequal numbers love,
Theſe digeſtives prepare you for your purge;
Of fumetery, centaury, and ſpurge,
And of ground-ivy add a leaf, or two,
All which within our yard or garden grow.
Eat theſe, and be, my lord, of better cheer:
Your father's ſon was never born to fear.
Madam, quoth he, grammercy for your care,
But Cato, whom you quoted, you may ſpare:
'Tis true, a wiſe and worthy man he ſeems,
And (as you ſay) gave no belief to dreams:
But other men of more authority,
And, by th' immortal pow'rs, as wiſe as he,
Maintain, with ſounder ſenſe, that dreams forebode;
For Homer plainly ſays they come from God.
Nor Cato ſaid it: but ſome modern fool
Impos'd in Cato's name on boys at ſchool.

Believe

Believe me, madam, morning dreams foreſhow
Th' events of things, and future weal or woe:
Some truths are not by reaſon to be try'd,
But we have ſure experience for our guide.
An ancient author, equal with the beſt,
Relates this tale of dreams among the reſt.

Two friends or brothers, with devout intent,
On ſome far pilgrimage together went.
It happen'd ſo that, when the ſun was down,
They juſt arriv'd by twilight at a town:
That day had been the baiting of a bull,
'Twas at a feaſt, and ev'ry inn ſo full,
That no void room in chamber, or on ground;
And but one ſorry bed was to be found:
And that ſo little it would hold but one,
Tho' till this hour they never lay alone.

So were they forc'd to part; one ſtay'd behind,
His fellow ſought what lodging he could find:
At laſt he found a ſtall where oxen ſtood,
And that he rather chooſe than lie abroad.
'Twas in a farther yard without a door;
But, for his eaſe, well litter'd was the floor.
His fellow, who the narrow bed had kept,
Was weary, and without a rocker ſlept:
Supine he ſnor'd; but in the dead of night,
He dreamt his friend appear'd before his ſight,
Who, with a ghaſtly look and doleful cry,
Said, help me, brother, or this night I die:
Ariſe, and help, before all help be vain,
Or in an ox's ſtall I ſhall be ſlain.

Rous'd from his reſt he waken'd in a ſtart,
Shiv'ring with horror, and with aking heart;
At length to cure himſelf by reaſon tries;
'Tis but a dream, and what are dreams but lies?
So thinking chang'd his ſide, and clos'd his eyes.

His dream returns; his friend appears again;
The murd'rers come, now help, or I am ſlain:
'Twas but a viſion ſtill, and viſions are but vain.
He dreamt the third: but now his friend appear'd
Pale, naked, pierc'd with wounds, with blood beſmear'd:
Thrice warn'd, awake, ſaid he; relief is late,
The deed is done; but thou revenge my fate:
Tardy of aid, unſeal thy heavy eyes,
Awake, and with the dawning day ariſe:
Take to the weſtern gate thy ready way,
For by that paſſage they my corps convey:
My corps is in a tumbril laid, among
The filth, and ordure, and incloſ'd with dung.
That cart arreſt, and raiſe a common cry;
For ſacred hunger of my gold, I die:
Then ſhew'd his grieſly wound: and laſt he drew
A piteous ſigh; and took a long adieu.
The frighted friend aroſe by break of day,
And found the ſtall where late his fellow lay.
Then of his impious hoſt inquiring more,
Was anſwer'd that his gueſt was gone before:
Mutt'ring he went, ſaid he, by morning-light,
And much complain'd of his ill reſt by night.
This rais'd ſuſpicion in the pilgrim's mind;
Becauſe all hoſts are of an evil kind,
And oft to ſhare the ſpoils with robbers join'd.
His dream confirm'd his thought: with troubled look
Straight to the weſtern gate his way he took:
There, as his dream foretold, a cart he found,
That carry'd compoſs forth to dung the ground.
This when the pilgrim ſaw, he ſtretch'd his throat,
And cry'd out murder with a yelling note.
My murder'd fellow in this cart lies dead,
Vengeance and juſtice on the villain's head,
You, magiſtrates, who ſacred laws diſpenſe,
On you I call to puniſh this offence.

The

'The word thus giv'n, within a little ſpace,
The mob came roaring out, and throng'd the place.
All in a trice they caſt the cart to ground,
And in the dung the murder'd body found;
Tho' breathleſs, warm, and reeking from the wound.
Good heav'n, whoſe darling attribute we find,
Is boundleſs grace, and mercy to mankind,
Abhors the cruel; and the deeds of night
By wond'rous ways reveals in open light:
Murder may paſs unpuniſh'd for a time,
But tardy juſtice will o'ertake the crime.
And oft a ſpeedier pain the guilty feels:
The hue and cry of heav'n purſues him at the heels,
Freſh from the fact; as in the preſent caſe,
The criminals are ſeiz'd upon the place:
Carter and hoſt confronted face to face.
Stiff in denial, as the law appoints,
On engines they diſtend their tortur'd joints:
So was confeſſion forc'd, th' offence was known,
And public juſtice on th' offenders done.
Here may you ſee that viſions are to dread;
And in the page that follows this, I read
Of two young merchants, whom the hope of gain
Induc'd in partnerſhip to croſs the main:
Waiting till willing winds their ſails ſupply'd,
Within a trading-town they long abide,
Full fairly ſituate on a haven's ſide.
One ev'ning it befel, that looking out,
The wind they long had wiſh'd was come about:
Well pleas'd they went to reſt; and if the gale
Till morn continu'd, both reſolv'd to ſail.
But as together in a bed they lay,
The younger had a dream at break of day.
A man he thought ſtood frowning at his ſide:
Who warn'd him for his ſafety to provide,
Nor put to ſea, but ſafe on ſhore abide.

I come, thy genius, to command thy ſtay;
Truſt not the winds, for fatal is the day,
And death unhop'd attends the watry way.
The viſion ſaid: and vaniſh'd from his ſight:
The dreamer waken'd in a mortal fright:
Then pull'd his drowſy neighbour, and declar'd
What in his ſlumber he had ſeen and heard.
His friend ſmil'd ſcornful, and with proud contempt
Rejects as idle what his fellow dreamt.
Stay, who will ſtay: for me no fears reſtrain,
Who follow Mercury the god of gain;
Let each man do as to his fancy ſeems,
I wait, not I, till you have better dreams.
Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes
When monarch reaſon ſleeps, this mimic wakes:
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A mob of coblers, and a court of kings:
Light fumes are merry, groſſer fumes are ſad:
Both are the reaſonable ſoul run mad:
And many monſtrous forms in ſleep we ſee,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long caſt behind
Ruſh forward in the brain, and come to mind.
The nurſe's legends are for truths receiv'd,
And the man dreams but what the boy believ'd.
Sometimes we but rehearſe a former play,
The night reſtores our actions done by day;
As hounds in ſleep will open for their prey.
In ſhort the farce of dreams is of a piece,
Chimeras all; and more abſurd, or leſs:
You, who believe in tales, abide alone;
Whate'er I get this voyage is my own.
Thus while he ſpoke, he heard the ſhouting crew
That call'd aboard, and took his laſt adieu.
The veſſel went before a merry gale,
And for quick paſſage put on ev'ry ſail:

But

But when leaſt fear'd, and ev'n in open day,
The miſchief overtook her in the way:
Whether ſhe ſprung a leak, I cannot find,
Or whether ſhe was overſet with wind,
Or that ſome rock below her bottom rent;
But down at once with all her crew ſhe went:
Her fellow-ſhips from far her loſs deſcry'd;
But only ſhe was ſunk, and all were ſafe beſide.
By this example you are taught again,
That dreams and viſions are not always vain:
But if, dear Partlet, you are ſtill in doubt,
Another tale ſhall make the former out.
Kenelm the ſon of Kenulph, Mercia's king,
Whoſe holy life the legends loudly ſing,
Warn'd in a dream, his murder did foretel
From point to point as after it befel:
All circumſtances to his nurſe he told,
(A wonder from a child of ſev'n years old:)
The dream with horror heard, the good old wife
From treaſon counſell'd him to guard his life;
But cloſe to keep the ſecret in his mind,
For a boy's viſion ſmall belief would find.
The pious child, by promiſe bound, obey'd,
Nor was the fatal murder long delay'd:
By Quenda ſlain, he fell before his time,
Made a young martyr by his ſiſter's crime.
The tale is told by venerable Bede,
Which at your better leiſure, you may read.
Macrobius too relates the viſion ſent
To the great Scipio, with the fam'd event:
Objections makes, but after makes replies,
And adds, that dreams are often propheſies.
Of Daniel you may read in holy writ,
Who, when the king his viſion did forget,
Cou'd word for word the wond'rous dream repeat.
Nor leſs of patriarch Joſeph underſtand,
Who by a dream enſlav'd th' Egyptian land,

The years of plenty and of dearth foretold,
When, for their bread, their liberty they ſold.
Nor muſt th' exalted butler be forgot,
Nor he whoſe dream preſag'd his hanging lot.
And did not Croeſus the ſame death foreſee,
Rais'd in his viſion on a lofty tree?
The wife of Hector, in his utmoſt pride,
Dreamt of his death the night before he dy'd;
Well was he warn'd from battle to refrain,
But men to death decreed are warn'd in vain:
He dar'd the dream, and by his fatal foe was ſlain.
Much more I know, which I forbear to ſpeak,
For ſee the ruddy day begins to break;
Let this ſuffice, that plainly I foreſee
My dream was bad, and bodes adverſity:
But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only ſerve to make the well-man ſick:
Of theſe his gain the ſharp phyſician makes,
And often gives a purge, but ſeldom takes:
They not correct, but poiſon all the blood,
And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all;
With ev'ry work of 'pothecary's hall.
Theſe melancholy matters I forbear:
But let me tell thee, Partlet mine, and ſwear,
That when I view the beauties of thy face,
I fear not death, nor dangers, nor diſgrace:
So may my ſoul have bliſs, as when I ſpy
The ſcarlet red about thy partridge eye,
While thou art conſtant to thy own true knight,
While thou art mine, and I am thy delight,
All ſorrows at thy preſence take their flight.
For true it is, as in principio,
Mulier eſt hominis confuſio.
Madam, the meaning of this Latin is,
That woman is to man his ſovereign bliſs.

For

For when by night I feel your tender ſide,
Tho' for the narrow perch I cannot ride,
Yet I have ſuch a ſolace in my mind,
That all my boding cares are caſt behind;
And ev'n already I forget my dream:
He ſaid, and downward flew from off the beam.
For day light now began apace to ſpring,
The thruſh to whiſtle, and the lark to ſing.
Then crowing clapp'd his wings, th' appointed call,
To chuck his wives together in the hall,
By this the widow had unbarr'd the door,
And Chanticleer went ſtrutting out before,
With royal courage, and with heart ſo light,
As ſhew'd he ſcorn'd the viſions of the night.
Now roaming in the yard he ſpurn'd the ground,
And gave to Partlet the firſt grain he found.
Then often feather'd her with wanton play,
And trod her twenty times ere prime of day:
And took by turns and gave ſo much delight,
Her ſiſters pin'd with envy at the ſight.
He chuck'd again, when other corns he found,
And ſcarcely deign'd to ſet a foot to ground.
But ſwagger'd like a lord about his hall,
And his ſev'n wives came running at his call.
'Twas now the month in which the world began,
(If March beheld the firſt created man:
And ſince the vernal equinox, the ſun,
In Aries twelve degrees, or more, had run;
When caſting up his eyes againſt the light,
Both month and day, and hour he meaſur'd right;
And told more truly, than th' Ephemeris:
For art may err, but nature cannot miſs.
Thus numb'ring times and ſeaſons in his breaſt,
His ſecond crowing the third hour confeſs'd.
Then turning, ſaid to Partlet, See, my dear,
How laviſh nature has adorn'd the year;

How the pale primroſe and blue violet ſpring,
And birds eſſay their throats diſus'd to ſing:
All theſe are ours; and I with pleaſure ſee
Man ſtrutting on two legs, and aping me:
An unfledg'd creature, of a lumpiſh frame,
Endow'd with fewer particles of flame,
Our dame ſits couring o'er a kitchen fire,
I draw freſh air, and nature's works admire:
And ev'n this day in more delight abound,
Than, ſince I was an egg, I ever found.
The time ſhall come when Chanticleer ſhall wiſh
His words unſaid, and hate his boaſted bliſs:
The creſted bird ſhall by experience know,
Jove made not him his maſter-piece below;
And learn the latter end of joy is woe.
The veſſel of his bliſs to dregs is run,
And Heav'n will have him taſte his other tun.
Ye wiſe draw near, and hearken to my tale,
Which proves that oft the proud by flatt'ry fall:
The legend is as true I undertake
As Triſtran is, and Launcelot of the lake:
Which all our ladies in ſuch rev'rence hold,
As if in book of martyrs it were told.
A fox full-fraught with ſeeming ſanctity,
That fear'd an oath, but, like the devil, would lie;
Who look'd like Lent, and had the holy leer,
And durſt not ſin before he ſaid his pray'r;
This pious cheat, that never ſuck'd the blood,
Nor chew'd the fleſh of lambs, but when he cou'd;
Had paſs'd three ſummers in the neighb'ring wood:
And muſing long, whom next to circumvent,
On Chanticleer his wicked fancy bent:
And in his high imagination caſt,
By ſtratagem to gratify his taſte.
The plot contriv'd, before the break of day,
Saint Reynard thro' the hedge had made his way;

The pale was next, but proudly with a bound
He leapt the fence of the forbidden ground:
Yet fearing to be ſeen, within a bed
Of coleworts he conceal'd his wily head;
Then ſculk'd till afternoon, and watch'd his time,
(As murd'rers uſe) to perpetrate his crime.
O hypocrite, ingenious to deſtroy,
O traitor, worſe than Simon was to Troy;
O vile ſubverter of the Gallic reign,
More falſe than Gano was to Charlemaign!
O Chanticleer in an unhappy hour
Didſt thou forſake the ſafety of thy bow'r:
Better for thee thou hadſt believed thy dream,
And not that day deſcended from the beam!
But here the doctors eagerly diſpute:
Some hold predeſtination abſolute:
Some clerks maintain, that Heav'n at firſt foreſees,
And in the virtue of foreſight decrees.
If this be ſo, then preſcience binds the will,
And mortals are not free to good or ill;
For what he firſt foreſaw, he muſt ordain,
Or its eternal preſcience may be vain:
As bad for us as preſcience had not been:
For firſt, or laſt, he's author of the ſin.
And who ſays that, let the blaſpheming man,
Say worſe ev'n of the devil, if he can.
For how can that eternal pow'r be juſt
To puniſh man, who ſins becauſe he muſt?
Or, how can he reward a virtuous deed,
Which is not done by us; but firſt decreed.
I cannot bolt this matter to the bran,
As Bradwardin and holy Auſtin can;
If preſcience can determine actions ſo
That we muſt do, becauſe he did foreknow,
Or that foreknowing, yet our choice is free,
Not forc'd to ſin by ſtrict neceſſity;

This

This ſtrict neceſſity they ſimple call,
Another ſort there is conditional.
The firſt ſo binds the will, that things foreknown
By ſpontaneity, not choice, are done.
Thus galley-ſlaves tug willing at their oar,
Content to work, in proſpect of the ſhore;
But wou'd not work at all if not conſtrain'd before.
That other does not liberty conſtrain,
But man may either act, or may refrain.
Heav'n made us agents free to good or ill,
And forc'd it not, tho' he foreſaw the will.
Freedom was firſt beſtow'd on human race,
And preſcience only held the ſecond place.
If he could make ſuch agents wholly free,
I not diſpute, the point's too high for me;
For heaven's unfathom'd pow'r what man can found
Or put to his Omnipotence a bound?
He made us to his image, all agree;
That image is the ſoul, and that muſt be,
Or not the maker's image, or be free.
But whether it were better man had been
By nature bound to good, not free to ſin,
I wave, for fear of ſplitting on a rock.
The tale I tell is only of a cock;
Who had not run the hazard of his life,
Had he believ'd his dream, and not his wife:
For women, with a miſchief to their kind,
Pervert, with bad advice, our better mind.
A woman's counſel brought us firſt to woe,
And made her man his paradiſe forego,
Where at heart's eaſe he liv'd; and might have been
As free from ſorrow as he was from ſin.
For what the devil had their ſex to do,
That, born to folly, they preſum'd to know,
And could not ſee the ſerpent in the graſs?
But I myſelf preſume, and let it paſs.

Silence

Silence in times of ſuff'ring is the beſt,
'Tis dangerous to diſturb an hornet's neſt.
In other authors you may find enough,
But all they ſay of dames is idle ſtuff.
Legends of lying wits together bound,
The wife of Bath would throw 'em to the ground;
Theſe are the words of Chanticleer, not mine,
I honour dames, and think their ſex divine.
Now to continue what my tale begun:
Lay madam Partlet baſking in the ſun,
Breaſt-high in ſand: her ſiſters, in a row,
Enjoy'd the beams above, the warmth below,
The cock, that of his fleſh was ever free,
Sung merrier than the mermaid in the ſea:
And ſo befel, that as he caſt his eye,
Among the coleworts on a butterfly,
He ſaw falſe Reynard where he lay full low:
I need not ſwear he had no liſt to crow:
But cry'd, cock, cock, and gave a ſudden ſtart,
As ſore diſmay'd and frighted at his heart.
For birds and beaſts, inform'd by nature, know
Kinds oppoſite to theirs, and fly their foe.
So Chanticleer, who never ſaw a fox,
Yet ſhunn'd him as a ſailor ſhuns the rocks.
But the falſe loon, who cou'd not work his will
By open force, employ'd his flatt'ring ſkill;
I hope, my lord, ſaid he, I not offend;
Are you afraid of me, that am your friend?
I were a beaſt indeed to do you wrong,
I, who have lov'd and honour'd you ſo long:
Stay, gentle Sir, nor take a falſe alarm,
For on my ſoul I never meant you harm.
I come no ſpy, nor as a traitor preſs,
To learn the ſecrets of your ſoft receſs:
Far be from Reynard ſo profane a thought,
But by the ſweetneſs of your voice was brought:

For,

For, as I bid my beads, by chance I heard
The ſong as of an angel in the yard;
A ſong that wou'd have charm'd th' infernal Gods,
And baniſh'd horrour from the dark abodes:
Had Orpheus ſung it in the nether ſphere,
So much the hymn had pleas'd the tyrant's ear,
The wife had been detain'd, to keep the huſband there.
My lord, your ſire familiarly I knew,
A peer deſerving ſuch a ſon as you:
He, with your lady-mother, (whom Heav'n reſt)
Has often grac'd my houſe, and been my gueſt:
To view his living features does me good,
For I am your poor neighbour in the wood;
And in my cottage ſhou'd be proud to ſee
The worthy heir of my friend's family.
But ſince I ſpeak of ſinging, let me ſay,
As with an upright heart I ſafely may,
That, ſave yourſelf, there breathes not on the ground
One like your father for a ſilver-ſound.
So ſweetly wou'd he wake the winter-day,
That matrons to the church miſtook their way,
And thought they heard the merry organ play.
And he to raiſe his voice with artful care,
(What will not beaux attempt to pleaſe the fair?)
On tiptoe ſtood to ſing with greater ſtrength,
And ſtretch'd his comely neck at all the length:
And while he ſtrain'd his voice to pierce the ſkies,
As ſaints in raptures uſe, would ſhut his eyes,
That the ſound ſtriving thro' the narrow throat,
His winking might avail to mend the note.
By this, in ſong, he never had his peer,
From ſweet Cecilia down to Chanticleer;
Not Maro's muſe, who ſung the mighty man,
Nor Pindar's heav'nly lyre, nor Horace when a ſwan.
Your anceſtors proceed from race divine:
From Brennus and Belinus is your line;

Who

Who gave to ſov'reign Rome ſuch loud alarms,
That ev'n the prieſts were not excus'd from arms.
Beſides, a famous monk of modern times
Has left of cocks recorded in his rhimes,
That of a pariſh prieſt the ſon and heir,
(When ſons of prieſts were from the proverb clear)
Affronted once a cock of noble kind,
And either lam'd his legs, or ſtruck him blind;
For which the clerk his father was diſgrac'd,
And in his benefice another plac'd.
Now ſing, my lord, if not for love of me,
Yet for the ſake of ſweet ſaint charity;
Make hills, and dales, and earth and heav'n rejoice,
And emulate your father's angel voice.
The cock was pleas'd to hear him ſpeak ſo fair,
And proud beſide, as ſolar people are;
Nor cou'd the treaſon from the truth deſcry,
So was he raviſh'd with this flattery:
So much the more, as from a little elf,
He had a high opinion of himſelf;
Tho' ſickly, ſlender, and not large of limb,
Concluding all the world was made for him.
Ye princes rais'd by poets to the Gods,
And Alexander'd up in lying odes,
Believe not ev'ry flattering knave's report,
There's many a Reynard lurking in the court;
And he ſhall be receiv'd with more regard
And liſten'd to, than modeſt truth is heard.
This Chanticleer, of whom the ſtory ſings,
Stood high upon his toes, and clapp'd his wings;
Then ſtretch'd his neck, and wink'd with both his eyes,
Ambitious, as he fought th' Olympic prize.
But while he pain'd himſelf to raiſe his note,
Falſe Reynard ruſh'd, and caught him by the throat.
Then on his back he laid the precious load,
And ſought his wonted ſhelter of the wood;

Swiftly he made his way, the miſchief done,
Of all unheeded, and purſu'd by none.
Alas, what ſtay is there in human ſtate,
Or who can ſhun inevitable fate?
The doom was written, the decree was paſt,
Ere the foundations of the world were caſt!
In Aries though the ſun exalted ſtood,
His patron-planet to procure his good;
Yet Saturn was his mortal foe, and he,
In Libra rais'd, oppos'd the ſame degree:
The rays both good and bad, of equal pow'r;
Each thwarting other made a mingled hour.
On friday-morn he dreamt this direful dream,
Croſs to the worthy native, in his ſcheme!
Ah bliſsful Venus, Goddeſs of delight,
How cou'dſt thou ſuffer thy devoted knight,
On thy own day to fall by foe oppreſs'd,
The wight of all the world who ſerv'd thee beſt?
Who true to love, was all for recreation,
And minded not the work of propagation.
Gaufride, who cou'dſt ſo well in rhime complain
The death of Richard with an arrow ſlain,
Why had not I thy muſe, or thou my heart,
To ſing this heavy dirge with equal art!
That I like thee on Friday might complain;
For on that day was Cœur de Lion ſlain.
Not louder cries, when Ilium was in flames,
Were ſent to heav'n by woeful Trojan dames,
When Pyrrhus toſs'd on high his burniſh'd blade,
And offer'd Priam to his father's ſhade,
Than for the cock the widow'd poultry made.
Fair Partlet firſt, when he was born from ſight,
With ſovereign ſhrieks bewail'd her captive knight:
Far louder than the Carthaginian wife,
When Aſdrubal her huſband loſt his life,
When ſhe beheld the ſmouldring flames aſcend,
And all the Punic glories at an end:

Willing into the fires ſhe plung'd her head,
With greater eaſe than others ſeek their bed.
Not more aghaſt the matrons of renown,
When tyrant Nero burn'd th' imperial town,
Shriek'd for the downfal in a doleful cry,
For which their guiltleſs lords were doom'd to die.
Now to my ſtory I return again:
The trembling widow, and her daughters twain,
This woful cackling cry with horror heard,
Of thoſe diſtracted damſels in the yard;
And ſtarting up beheld the heavy ſight,
How Reynard to the foreſt took his flight,
And croſs his back, as in triumphant ſcorn,
The hope and pillar of the houſe was borne.
The fox, the wicked fox, was all the cry;
Out from his houſe ran ev'ry neighbour nigh:
The vicar firſt, and after him the crew,
With forks and ſtaves the felon to purſue.
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot with the band,
And Malkin, with her diſtaff in her hand:
Ran cow and calf, and family of hogs,
In panic horror of purſuing dogs;
With many a deadly grunt and doleful ſqueak,
Poor ſwine, as if their pretty hearts would break.
The ſhouts of men, the women in diſmay,
With ſhrieks augment the terror of the day.
The ducks that heard the proclamation cry'd,
And fear'd a perſecution might betide,
Full twenty mile from town their voyage take,
Obſcure in ruſhes of the liquid lake.
The geeſe fly o'er the barn; the bees in arms
Drive headlong from their waxen cells in ſwarms.
Jack Straw at London-ſtone, with all his rout,
Struck not the city with ſo loud a ſhout;
Not when with Engliſh hate they did purſue
A French man, or an unbelieving Jew:

Not when the welkin rung with one and all;
And echoes bounded back from Fox's hall:
Earth ſeem'd to ſink beneath, and heaven above to fall.
With might and main they chac'd the murd'rous fox,
With brazen trumpets, and inflated box,
To kindle Mars with military ſounds,
Nor wanted horns t'inſpire ſagacious hounds.
But ſee how Fortune can confound the wiſe,
And when they leaſt expect it, turn the dice.
The captive-cock, who ſcarce cou'd draw his breath,
And lay within the very jaws of death;
Yet in this agony his fancy wrought,
And fear ſupply'd him with this happy thought:
Yours is the prize, victorious prince, ſaid he,
The vicar my defeat, and all the village ſee.
Enjoy your friendly fortune while you may,
And bid the churls that envy you the prey
Call back their mungril curs, and ceaſe their cry,
See fools, the ſhelter of the wood is nigh,
And Chanticleer in your deſpite ſhall die,
He ſhall be pluck'd and eaten to the bone.
'Tis well advis'd, in faith it ſhall be done;
This Reynard ſaid: but as the word he ſpoke,
The pris'ner with a ſpring from priſon broke:
Then ſtretch'd his feather'd fans with all his might,
And to the neighb'ring maple wing'd his flight;
Whom when the traitor ſafe on tree beheld,
He curs'd the Gods, with ſhame and ſorrow fill'd;
Shame for his folly, ſorrow out of time,
For plotting an unprofitable crime;
Yet maſt'ring both, th' artificer of lies
Renews th' aſſault, and his laſt batt'ry tries.
Tho' I, ſaid he, did ne'er in thought offend,
How juſtly may my lord ſuſpect his friend?
Th' appearance is againſt me, I confeſs,
Who ſeemingly have put you in diſtreſs:

You,

You, if your goodneſs does not plead my cauſe,
May think I broke all hoſpitable laws,
To bear you from your palace-yard by might,
And put your noble perſon in a fright:
This, ſince you take it ill, I muſt repent,
Tho' Heav'n can witneſs with no bad intent:
I practis'd it, to make you taſte your cheer
With double pleaſure, firſt prepar'd by fear.
So loyal ſubjects often ſeize their prince,
Forc'd (for his good) to ſeeming violence,
Yet mean his ſacred perſon not the leaſt offence.
Deſcend; ſo help me Jove as you ſhall find
That Reynard comes of no diſſembling kind.
Nay quoth the cock; but I beſhrew us both,
If I believe a ſaint upon his oath:
An honeſt man may take a knave's advice,
But idiots only may be cozen'd twice:
Once warn'd is well bewar'd; not flatt'ring lies
Shall ſooth me more to ſing with winking eyes,
And open mouth, for fear of catching flies.
Who blindfold walks upon a river's brim,
When he ſhould ſee, has he deſerv'd to ſwim?
Better, Sir cock, let all contention ceaſe,
Come down, ſaid Reynard, let us treat of peace.
A peace with all my ſoul, ſaid Chanticleer;
But, with your favour, I will treat it here:
And leſt the truce with treaſon ſhould be mixt,
'Tis my concern to have the tree betwixt.

The MORAL.

In this plain fable you th' effect may ſee
Of negligence, and fond credulity:
And learn beſides of flatt'rers to beware,
Then moſt pernicious when they ſpeak too fair.

The cock and fox, the fool and knave imply;
The truth is moral, tho' the tale a lye.
Who ſpoke in parables, I dare not ſay;
But ſure he knew it was a pleaſing way,
Sound ſenſe, by plain example, to convey.
And in a heathen author we may find,
That pleaſure with inſtruction ſhou'd be join'd;
So take the corn, and leave the chaff behind.

THE

FLOWER and the LEAF:

OR, THE

LADY in the ARBOUR.

A VISION.

NOW turning from the wintry ſigns, the ſun
His courſe exalted thro' the Ram had run,
And whirling up the ſkies, his chariot drove
Thro' Taurus, and the lightſome realms of love;
Where Venus from her orb deſcends in ſhow'rs,
To glad the ground, and paint the fields with flow'rs:
When firſt the tender blades of graſs appear,
And buds, that yet the blaſt of Eurus fear,
Stand at the door of life, and doubt to clothe the year:
Till gentle heat, and ſoft repeated rains,
Make the green blood to dance within their veins:
Then, at their call, embolden'd out they come,
And ſwell the gems, and burſt the narrow room;
Broader and broader yet, their blooms diſplay,
Salute the welcome ſun, and entertain the day.
Then from their breathing ſouls the ſweets repair
To ſcent the ſkies, and purge th' unwholeſom air:
Joy ſpreads the heart, and, with a general ſong,
Spring iſſues out, and leads the jolly months along.
In that ſweet ſeaſon, as in bed I lay,
And ſought in ſleep to paſs the night away,
I turn'd my weary'd ſide, but ſtill in vain,
Tho' full of youthful health, and void of pain:

Cares I had none, to keep me from my reſt,
For love had never enter'd in my breaſt;
I wanted nothing fortune could ſupply,
Nor did ſhe ſlumber till that hour deny.
I wonder'd then, but after found it true,
Much joy had dry'd away the balmy dew:
Seas wou'd be pools, without the bruſhing air,
To curl the waves; and ſure ſome little care
Shou'd weary nature ſo, to make her want repair.
When Chanticleer the ſecond watch had ſung,
Scorning the ſcorner ſleep, from bed I ſprung;
And dreſſing, by the moon, in looſe array,
Paſs'd out in open air, preventing day,
And ſought a goodly grove, as fancy led my way.
Straight as a line in beauteous order ſtood
Of oaks unſhorn a venerable wood;
Freſh was the graſs beneath, and ev'ry tree,
At diſtance planted in a due degree,
Their branching arms in air with equal ſpace
Stretch'd to their neighbours with a long embrace:
And the new leaves on ev'ry bough were ſeen,
Some ruddy colour'd, ſome of lighter green.
The painted birds, companions of the ſpring,
Hopping from ſpray to ſpray, were heard to ſing.
Both eyes and ears receiv'd a like delight,
Enchanting muſic, and a charming ſight.
On Philomel I fix'd my whole deſire;
And liſten'd for the queen of all the quire;
Fain would I hear her heavenly voice to ſing;
And wanted yet an omen to the ſpring.
Attending long in vain, I took the way,
Which through a path, but ſcarcely printed, lay;
In narrow mazes oft it ſeem'd to meet,
And look'd, as lightly preſs'd by fairy feet.
Wandring I walk'd alone, for ſtill methought
To ſome ſtrange end ſo ſtrange a path was wrought:

At

At laſt it led me where an arbour ſtood,
The ſacred receptacle of the wood:
This place unmark'd, tho' oft I walk'd the green,
In all my progreſs I had never ſeen:
And ſeiz'd at once with wonder and delight,
Gaz'd all around me, new to the tranſporting ſight.
'Twas bench'd with turf, and goodly to be ſeen,
The thick young graſs aroſe in freſher green:
The mound was newly made, no ſight could paſs
Betwixt the nice partitions of the graſs;
The well-united ſods ſo cloſely lay;
And all around the ſhades defended it from day,
For ſycamores with eglantine were ſpread,
A hedge about the ſides, a covering over head.
And ſo the fragrant brier was wove between,
The ſycamore and flow'rs were mix'd with green,
That nature ſeem'd to vary the delight;
And ſatisfy'd at once the ſmell and ſight.
The maſter workman of the bow'r was known
Through fairy-lands, and built for Oberon;
Who twining leaves with ſuch proportion drew,
They roſe by meaſure, and by rule they grew;
No mortal tongue can half the beauty tell:
For none but hands divine could work ſo well.
Both roof and ſides were like a parlour made,
A ſoft receſs, and a cool ſummer ſhade;
The hedge was ſet ſo thick, no foreign eye
The perſons plac'd within it could eſpy:
But all that paſs'd without with eaſe was ſeen,
As if nor fence nor tree was plac'd between.
'Twas border'd with a field; and ſome was plain
With graſs, and ſome was ſow'd with riſing grain.
That (now the dew with ſpangles deck'd the ground)
A ſweeter ſpot of earth was never found.
I look'd and look'd, and ſtill with new delight;
Such joy my ſoul, ſuch pleaſures fill'd my ſight:

And

And the freſh eglantine exhal'd a breath,
Whoſe odours were of pow'r to raiſe from death.
Nor ſullen diſcontent, nor anxious care,
Ev'n tho' brought thither, could inhabit there:
But thence they fled as from their mortal foe;
For this ſweet place could only pleaſure know.
Thus as I mus'd, I caſt aſide my eye,
And ſaw a medlar-tree was planted nigh.
The ſpreading branches made a goodly ſhow,
And full of opening blooms was ev'ry bough:
A goldfinch there I ſaw with gawdy pride
Of painted plumes, that hopp'd from ſide to ſide,
Still pecking as ſhe paſs'd; and ſtill ſhe drew
The ſweets from ev'ry flow'r, and ſuck'd the dew:
Suffic'd at length, ſhe warbl'd in her throat,
And tun'd her voice to many a merry note,
But indiſtinct, and neither ſweet nor clear,
Yet ſuch as ſooth'd my ſoul, and pleas'd my ear.
Her ſhort performance was no ſooner try'd,
When ſhe I ſought, the nightingale, reply'd:
So ſweet, ſo ſhrill, ſo variouſly ſhe ſung,
That the grove echo'd, and the valleys rung:
And I ſo raviſh'd with her heavenly note
I ſtood intranc'd, and had no room for thought,
But all o'er-power'd with ecſtaſy of bliſs,
Was in a pleaſing dream of paradiſe;
At length I wak'd, and looking round the bow'r
Search'd ev'ry tree, and pry'd on ev'ry flow'r,
If any where by chance I might eſpy,
The rural poet of the melody:
For ſtill methought ſhe ſung not far away:
At laſt I found her on a laurel ſpray.
Cloſe by my ſide ſhe ſat, and fair in ſight,
Full in a line, againſt her oppoſite;
Where ſtood with eglantine the laurel twin'd;
And both their native ſweets were well conjoin'd.

On the green bank I ſat, and liſten'd long;
(Sitting was more convenient for the ſong:)
Nor till her lay was ended could I move,
But wiſh'd to dwell for ever in the grove.
Only methought the time too ſwiftly paſs'd,
And ev'ry note I fear'd would be the laſt.
My ſight and ſmell, and hearing were employ'd,
And all three ſenſes in full guſt enjoy'd.
And what alone did all the reſt ſurpaſs,
The ſweet poſſeſſion of the fairy place;
Single, and conſcious to myſelf alone
Of pleaſures to th' excluded world unknown:
Pleaſures which no where elſe were to be found,
And all Elyſium in a ſpot of ground.

Thus while I ſat intent to ſee and hear,
And drew perfumes of more than vital air,
All ſuddenly I heard th' approaching ſound
Of vocal muſic, on th' inchanted ground:
An hoſt of ſaints it ſeem'd, ſo full the quire;
As if the bleſs'd above did all conſpire
To join their voices, and neglect the lyre.
At length there iſſued from the grove behind
A fair aſſembly of the female kind:
A train leſs fair, as ancient fathers tell,
Seduc'd the ſons of heaven to rebel.
I paſs their form, and ev'ry charming grace,
Leſs than an angel wou'd their worth debaſe:
But their attire, like liveries of a kind,
All rich and rare, is freſh within my mind.
In velvet white as ſnow the troop was gown'd,
The ſeams with ſparkling emeralds ſet around;
Their hoods and ſleeves the ſame; and purfled o'er
With diamonds, pearls, and all the ſhining ſtore
Of eaſtern pomp: their long deſcending train,
With rubies edg'd, and ſaphires, ſwept the plain:
High on their heads, with jewels richly ſet,
Each lady wore a radiant coronet.

Beneath the circles, all the quire was grac'd
With chaplets green on their fair foreheads plac'd.
Of laurel ſome, of woodbine many more;
And wreaths of Agnus caſtus others bore;
Theſe laſt, who with thoſe virgin crowns were dreſs'd,
Appear'd in higher honour than the reſt.
They danc'd around: but in the midſt was ſeen
A lady of a more majeſtic mien;
By ſtature, and by beauty mark'd their ſov'reign queen.
She in the midſt began with ſober grace;
Her ſervant's eyes were fix'd upon her face,
And as ſhe mov'd or turn'd, her motions view'd,
Her meaſures kept and ſtep by ſtep purſu'd.
Methought ſhe trod the ground with greater grace,
With more of godhead ſhining in her face;
And as in beauty ſhe ſurpaſs'd the quire,
So, nobler than the reſt, was her attire.
A crown of ruddy gold inclos'd her brow,
Plain without pomp, and rich without a ſhow:
A branch of Agnus caſtus in her hand
She bore aloft (her ſcepter of command;)
Admir'd, ador'd by all the circling croud,
For whereſoe'er ſhe turn'd her face, they bow'd:
And as ſhe danc'd, a roundelaly ſhe ſung,
In honour of the laurel, ever young:
She rais'd her voice on high, and ſung ſo clear,
The fawns came ſcudding from the groves to hear:
And all the bending foreſt lent an ear.
At ev'ry cloſe ſhe made, th' attending throng
Reply'd, and bore the burden of the ſong:
So juſt, ſo ſmall, yet in ſo ſweet a note,
It ſeem'd the muſic melted in the throat.
Thus dancing on, and ſinging as they danc'd,
They to the middle of the mead advanc'd,
Till round my arbour a new ring they made,
And footed it about the ſecret ſhade.

O'erjoy'd

O'erjoy'd to ſee the jolly troop ſo near,
But ſomewhat aw'd, I ſhook with holy fear;
Yet not ſo much, but that I noted well
Who did the moſt in ſong, or dance excel.
Not long I had obſerv'd, when from afar
I heard a ſudden ſymphony of war;
The neighing courſers, and the ſoldiers cry,
And ſounding trumps that ſeem'd to tear the ſky:
I ſaw ſoon after this, behind the grove
From whence the ladies did in order move,
Come iſſuing out in arms a warrior train,
That like a deluge pour'd upon the plain:
On barbed ſteeds they rode in proud array,
Thick as the college of the bees in May,
When ſwarming o'er the duſky fields they fly,
New to the flow'rs, and intercept the ſky.
So fierce they drove, their courſers were ſo fleet,
That the turf trembled underneath their feet.
To tell their coſtly furniture were long,
The ſummer's day wou'd end before the ſong:
To purchaſe but the tenth of all their ſtore,
Would make the mighty Perſian monarch poor.
Yet what I can, I will; before the reſt
The trumpets iſſu'd in white mantles dreſs'd:
A numerous troop, and all their heads around
With chaplets green of cerrial-oak were crown'd,
And at each trumpet was a banner bound;
Which waving in the wind diſplay'd at large
Their maſter's coat of arms, and knightly charge.
Broad were the banners, and of ſnowy hue,
A purer web the ſilk-worm never drew.
The chief about their necks the ſcutcheons wore,
With orient pearls and jewels pow'der'd o'er:
Broad were their collars too, and every one
Was ſet about with many a coſtly ſtone.
Next theſe of kings at arms a goodly train
In proud array came prancing o'er the plain:

Their cloaks were cloth of ſilver mix'd with gold,
And garlands green around their temples roll'd:
Rich crowns were on their royal ſcutcheons plac'd,
With ſapphires, diamonds, and with rubies grac'd:
And as the trumpets their appearance made,
So theſe in habits were alike array'd;
But with a pace more ſober, and more ſlow;
And twenty, rank in rank, they rode a row.
The purſuivants came next, in number more;
And like the heralds each his ſcutcheon bore:
Clad in white velvet all their troop they led,
With each an oaken chaplet on his head.
Nine royal knights in equal rank ſucceed,
Each warrior mounted on a fiery ſteed:
In golden armour glorious to behold;
The rivets of their arms were nail'd with gold.
Their ſurcoats of white ermin fur were made;
With cloth of gold between, that caſt a glitt'ring ſhade.
The trappings of their ſteeds were of the ſame;
The golden fringe ev'n ſet the ground on flame,
And drew a precious trail: a crown divine
Of laurel did about their temples twine.
Three henchmen were for ev'ry knight aſſign'd,
All in rich livery clad, and of a kind;
White velvet, but unſhorn, for cloaks they wore,
And each within his hand a truncheon bore:
The foremoſt held a helm of rare device;
A prince's ranſom would not pay the price.
The ſecond bore the buckler of his knight,
The third of cornel-wood a ſpear upright,
Headed with piercing ſteel, and poliſh'd bright.
Like to their lords their equipage was ſeen,
And all their foreheads crown'd with garlands green.
And after theſe came arm'd with ſpear and ſhield
An hoſt ſo great, as cover'd all the field:
And all their foreheads, like the knights before,
With laurels ever-green were ſhaded o'er.

Or oak, or other leaves of laſting kind,
Tenacious of the ſtem, and firm againſt the wind.
Some in their hands, beſide the lance and ſhield,
The boughs of woodbine or of hawthorn held,
Or branches for their myſtic emblems took,
Of palm, of laurel, or of Cerrial oak.
Thus marching to the trumpet's lofty ſound,
Drawn in two lines adverſe they wheel'd around,
And in the middle meadow took their ground.
Among themſelves the turney they divide,
In equal ſquadrons rang'd on either ſide.
Then turn'd their horſes heads, and man to man,
And ſteed to ſteed oppos'd, the juſts began.
They lightly ſet their lances in the reſt,
And, at the ſign, againſt each other preſs'd:
They met. I ſitting at my eaſe beheld
The mix'd events, and fortunes of the field.
Some broke their ſpears, ſome tumbled horſe and man,
And round the field the lighten'd courſers ran.
An hour and more, like tides, in equal ſway
They ruſh'd, and won by turns, and loſt the day:
At length the nine (who ſtill together held)
Their fainting foes to ſhameful fight compell'd,
And with reſiſtleſs force o'er-ran the field.
Thus, to their fame, when finiſh'd was the fight,
The victors from their lofty ſteeds alight:
Like them diſmounted all the warlike train,
And two by two proceeded o'er the plain:
Till to the fair aſſembly they advanc'd,
Who near the ſecret arbour ſung and danc'd.
The ladies left their meaſures at the ſight,
To meet the chiefs returning from the fight,
And each with open arms embrac'd her choſen knight.
Amid the plain a ſpreading laurel ſtood,
The grace and ornament of all the wood:
That pleaſing ſhade they ſought, a ſoft retreat
From ſudden April ſhowers, a ſhelter from the heat:

Her leafy arms with ſuch extent were ſpread,
So near the clouds was her aſpiring head,
That hoſts of birds, that wing the liquid air,
Perch'd in the boughs, had nightly lodging there:
And flocks of ſheep beneath the ſhade from far
Might hear the rattling hail, and wintry war;
From Heav'n's inclemency here found retreat,
Enjoy'd the cool, and ſhunn'd the ſcorching heat:
A hundred knights might there at eaſe abide;
And ev'ry knight a lady by his ſide:
The trunk itſelf ſuch odours did bequeath,
That a Moluccan breeze to theſe was common breath.
The lords and ladies here, approaching, paid
Their homage, with a low obeiſance made;
And ſeem'd to venerate the ſacred ſhade.
Theſe rites perform'd, their pleaſures they purſue,
With ſong of love, and mix with pleaſures new;
Around the holy tree their dance they frame,
And ev'ry champion leads his choſen dame.
I caſt my ſight upon the farther field,
And a freſh object of delight beheld:
For from the region of the Weſt I heard
New muſic ſound, and a new troop appear'd;
Of knights, and ladies mix'd a jolly band,
But all on foot they march'd, and hand in hand
The ladies dreſs'd in rich ſymars were ſeen
Of Florence ſattin, flower'd with white and green,
And for a ſhade betwixt the bloomy gridelin.
The borders of their petticoats below
Were guarded thick with rubies on a row;
And ev'ry damſel wore upon her head
Of flow'rs a garland blended white and red.
Attir'd in mantles all the knights were ſeen,
That gratify'd the view with chearful green:
Their chaplets of their ladies colours were,
Compos'd of white and red, to ſhade their ſhining hair.

Before

Before the merry troop the minſtrels play'd;
All in their maſter's liv'ries were array'd,
And clad in green, and on their temples wore
The chaplets white and red their ladies bore.
Their inſtruments were various in their kind,
Some for the bow, and ſome for breathing wind:
The ſawtry, pipe, and hautboy's noiſy band,
And the ſoft lute trembling beneath the touching hand.
A tuft of daiſies on a flow'ry lay
They ſaw, and thitherward they bent their way;
To this both knights and dames their homage made,
And due obeiſance to the daiſy paid.
And then the band of flutes began to play,
To which a lady ſung a virelay:
And ſtill at ev'ry cloſe ſhe would repeat
The burden of the ſong, The daiſy is ſo ſweet.
The daiſy is ſo ſweet, when ſhe begun,
The troop of knights and dames continu'd on.
The conſort and the voice ſo charm'd my ear,
And ſooth'd my ſoul, that it was heav'n to hear.
But ſoon their pleaſure paſs'd: at noon of day,
The ſun with ſultry beams began to play:
Not Sirius ſhoots a fiercer flame from high,
When with his pois'nous breath he blaſts the ſky:
Then droop'd the fading flow'rs (their beauty fled)
And clos'd their ſickly eyes, and hung the head;
And rivell'd up with heat, lay dying in their bed.
The ladies gaſp'd, and ſcarcely could reſpire;
The breath they drew, no longer air but fire;
The fainty knights were ſcorch'd; and knew not where
To run for ſhelter, for no ſhade was near;
And after this the gathering clouds amain
Pour'd down a ſtorm of rattling hail and rain:
And lightning flaſh'd betwixt: the field, and flow'rs,
Burnt up before, were buried in the ſnow'rs.

The ladies and the knights, no ſhelter nigh,
Bare to the weather and the wintry ſky,
Were dropping wet, diſconſolate, and wan,
And thro' their thin array, receiv'd the rain;
While thoſe in white protected by the tree
Saw paſs in vain th' aſſault, and ſtood from danger free,
But as compaſſion mov'd their gentle minds,
When ceas'd the ſtorm, and ſilent were the winds,
Diſpleas'd at what, not ſuff'ring, they had ſeen,
They went to chear the faction of the green:
The queen in white array, before her band,
Saluting, took her rival by the hand;
So did the knights and dames, with courtly grace,
And with behaviour ſweet their foes embrace,
Then thus the queen with laurel on her brow,
Fair ſiſter I have ſuffer'd in your woe;
Nor ſhall be wanting ought within my pow'r
For your relief in my refreſhing bow'r.
That other anſwer'd with a lowly look,
And ſoon the gracious invitation took:
For ill at eaſe both ſhe and all her train
The ſcorching ſun had born, and beating rain.
Like courteſy was us'd by all in white,
Each dame a dame receiv'd, and ev'ry knight a knight.
The laurel champions with their ſwords invade
The neighb'ring foreſts, where the juſts were made,
And ſerewood from the rotten hedges took,
And ſeeds of latent fire, from flints provoke:
A chearful blaze aroſe, and by the fire
They warm'd their frozen feet, and dry'd their wet attire.
Refreſh'd with heat, the ladies ſought around
For virtuous herbs, which gather'd from the ground
They ſqueez'd the juice, and cooling ointment made,
Which on their ſun-burnt cheeks, and their chapt ſkins
they laid;

Then

Then ſought green ſalads, which they bade them eat,
A ſovereign remedy for inward heat.
The lady of the leaf ordain'd a feaſt,
And made the lady of the flow'r her gueſt:
When lo, a bow'r aſcended on the plain,
With ſudden ſeats ordain'd, and large for either train.
This bow'r was near my pleaſant arbour plac'd,
That I could hear and ſee whatever paſs'd:
The ladies ſat with each a knight between,
Diſtinguiſh'd by their colours white and green;
The vanquiſh'd party with the victors join'd,
Nor wanted ſweet diſcourſe the banquet of the mind.
Mean time the minſtrels play'd on either ſide,
Vain of their art, and for the maſtery vy'd:
The ſweet contention laſted for an hour,
And reach'd my ſecret arbour from the bow'r.
The ſun was ſet; and Veſper, to ſupply
His abſent beams, had lighted up the ſky.
When Philomel officious all the day
To ſing the ſervice of th' enſuing May,
Fled from her laurel ſhade, and wing'd her flight
Directly to the queen array'd in white:
And hopping ſat familiar on her hand,
A new muſician, and increas'd the band.
The goldfinch, who, to ſhun the ſcalding heat,
Had chang'd the medlar for a ſafer ſeat,
And hid in buſhes 'ſcap'd the bitter ſhow'r,
Now perch'd upon the lady of the flow'r;
And either ſongſter holding out their throats,
And folding up their wings, renew'd their notes:
As if all day, preluding to the fight,
They only had rehears'd, to ſing by night:
The banquet ended, and the battle done,
They danc'd by ſtar-light and the friendly moon:
And when they were to part, the laureat queen
Supply'd with ſteeds the lady of the green,

Her and her train conducting on the way,
The moon to follow, and avoid the day.
This when I saw, inquisitive to know
The secret moral of the mystique show,
I started from my shade, in hopes to find
Some nymph to satisfy my longing mind:
And as my fair adventure fell, I found
A lady all in white, with laurel crown'd,
Who clos'd the rear, and softly pac'd along,
Repeating to her self the former song.
With due respect my body I inclin'd,
As to some being of superior kind,
And made my court according to the day,
Wishing her queen and her a happy May.
Great thanks, my daughter, with a gracious bow,
She said; and I, who much desired to know
Of whence she was, yet fearful how to break
My mind, adventur'd humbly thus to speak:
Madam, might I presume and not offend,
So may the stars and shining moon attend
Your nightly sports, as you vouchsafe to tell,
What nymphs they were who mortal forms excel,
And what the knights who fought in lifted fields so well.
To this the dame reply'd: Fair daughter, know,
That what you saw was all a fairy show:
And all those airy shapes you now behold,
Were human bodies once, and cloth'd with earthly mold,
Our souls, not yet prepar'd for upper light,
Till doomsday wander in the shades of night;
This only holiday of all the year,
We privileg'd in sunshine may appear:
With songs and dance we celebrate the day,
And with due honours usher in the May.
At other times we reign by night alone,
And posting thro' the skies pursue the moon:
But when the morn arises, none are found;
For cruel Demogorgon walks the round,

And if he finds a fairy lag in light,
He drives the wretch before, and laſhes into night.
All courteous are by kind; and ever proud
With friendly offices to help the good.
In every land we have a larger ſpace
Than what is known to you of mortal race:
Where we with green adorn our fairy bow'rs,
And e'en this grove, unſeen before, is ours.
Know farther; ev'ry lady cloath'd in white,
And, crown'd with oak and laurel ev'ry knight,
Are ſervants to the leaf, by liveries known
Of innocence; and I myſelf am one.
Saw you not her ſo graceful to behold
In white attire, and crown'd with radiant gold?
The ſovereign lady of our land is ſhe,
Diana call'd, the queen of chaſtity:
And, for the ſpotleſs name of maid ſhe bears,
That Agnus caſtus in her hand appears;
And all her train, with leafy chaplets crown'd,
Were for unblam'd virginity renown'd;
But thoſe the chief and higheſt in command
Who bear thoſe holy branches in their hand:
The knights adorn'd with laurel crowns are they,
Whom death nor danger ever could diſmay,
Victorious names, who made the world obey:
Who, while they liv'd, in deeds of arms excell'd,
And after death for deities were held.
But thoſe, who wear the woodbine on their brow,
Were knights of love, who never broke their vow;
Firm to their plighted faith, and ever free
From fears and fickle chance, and jealouſy.
The lords and ladies, who the woodbine bear,
As true as Triſtram and Iſotta were.
But what are thoſe, ſaid I, th' unconquer'd nine,
Who crown'd with laurel-wreaths in golden armour ſhine?

And who the knights in green, and what the train
Of ladies dreſs'd with daiſies on the plain?
Why both the bands in worſhip diſagree,
And ſome adore the flow'r, and ſome the tree?
Juſt is your ſuit, fair daughter, ſaid the dame:
Thoſe laurell'd chiefs were men of mighty fame;
Nine worthies were they call'd of diff'rent rites,
Three jews, three pagans, and three chriſtian knights.
Theſe, as you ſee, ride foremoſt in the field,
As they the foremoſt rank of honour held,
And all in deeds of chivalry excell'd:
Their temples wreath'd with leaves, that ſtill renew;
For deathleſs laurel is the victor's due:
Who bear the bows were knights in Arthur's reign,
Twelve they, and twelve the peers of Charlemain:
For bows the ſtrength of brawny arms imply,
Emblems of valour, and of victory.
Behold an order yet of newer date,
Doubling their number, equal in their ſtate;
Our England's ornament, the crown's defence,
In battle brave, protectors of their prince:
Unchang'd by fortune, to their ſovereign true,
For which their manly legs are bound with blue.
Theſe, of the garter call'd, of faith unſtain'd,
In fighting fields the laurel have obtain'd,
And well repaid the honours which they gain'd.
The laurel wreaths were firſt by Cæſar worn,
And ſtill they Cæſar's ſucceſſors adorn:
One leaf of this is immortality,
And more of worth than all the world can buy.
One doubt remains, ſaid I, the dames in green,
What were their qualities, and who their queen?
Flora commands, ſaid ſhe, thoſe nymphs and knights,
Who liv'd in ſlothful eaſe and looſe delights;
Who never acts of honour durſt purſue,
The men inglorious knights, the ladies all untrue:

Who

Who nurs'd in idleneſs, and train'd in courts,
Paſs'd all their precious hours in plays, and ſports,
Till death behind came ſtalking on, unſeen,
And wither'd (like the ſtorm) the freſhneſs of their green.
Theſe, and their mates, enjoy their preſent hour,
And therefore pay their homage to the flow'r.
But knights in knightly deeds ſhould perſevere,
And ſtill continue what at firſt they were;
Continue, and proceed in honour's fair career.
No room for cowardice, or dull delay;
From good to better they ſhould urge their way.
For this with golden ſpurs the chiefs are grac'd,
With pointed rowels arm'd to mend their haſte;
For this with laſting leaves their brows are bound;
For laurel is the ſign of labour crown'd,
Which bears the bitter blaſt, nor ſhaken falls to ground:
From winter winds it ſuffers no decay,
For ever freſh and fair, and ev'ry month is May.
Ev'n when the vital ſap retreats below,
Ev'n when the hoary head is hid in ſnow;
The life is in the leaf, and ſtill between
The fits of falling ſnow appears the ſtreaky green.
Not ſo the flow'r, which laſt for little ſpace,
A ſhort-liv'd good, and an uncertain grace;
This way and that the feeble ſtem is driv'n,
Weak to ſuſtain the ſtorms, and injuries of heav'n.
Propp'd by the ſpring, it lifts aloft the head,
But of a fickly beauty, ſoon to ſhed;
In ſummer living, and in winter dead.
For things of tender kind, for pleaſure made,
Shoot up with ſwift increaſe, and ſudden are decay'd.
With humble words, the wiſeſt I could frame,
And proffer'd ſervice, I repaid the dame;
That, of her grace, ſhe gave her maid to know
The ſecret meaning of this moral ſhow.

And ſhe, to prove what profit I had made
Of myſtic truth, in fables firſt convey'd,
Demanded till the next returning May,
Whether the leaf or flow'r I would obey?
I choſe the leaf; ſhe ſmil'd with ſober chear,
And wiſh'd me fair adventure for the year,
And gave me charms and ſigils, for defence
Againſt ill tongues that ſcandal innocence;
But I, ſaid ſhe, my fellows muſt purſue,
Already paſt the plain, and out of view.
We parted thus; I homeward ſped my way,
Bewilder'd in the wood till dawn of day;
And met the merry crew who danc'd about the May.
Then late refreſh'd with ſleep, I roſe to write
The viſionary vigils of the night:
Bluſh, as thou may'ſt, my little book with ſhame,
Nor hope with homely verſe to purchaſe fame;
For ſuch thy Maker choſe; and ſo deſign'd
Thy ſimple ſtile to ſuit thy lowly kind.

THE

WIFE of BATH,

HER

TALE.

IN days of old, when Arthur fill'd the throne,
Whoſe acts and fame to foreign lands were blown;
The king of elfs and little fairy queen
Gamboll'd on heaths, and danc'd on ev'ry green;
And where the jolly troop had led the round,
The graſs unbidden roſe, and mark'd the ground:
Nor darkling did they glance, the ſilver light
Of Phœbe ſerv'd to guide their ſteps aright,
And with their tripping pleas'd, prolong the night.
Her beams they follow'd, where at full ſhe plaid,
Nor longer than ſhe ſhed her horns they ſtaid,
From thence with airy flight to foreign lands convey'd.
Above the reſt our Britain held they dear,
More ſolemnly they kept their ſabbaths here, [year.
And made more ſpacious rings, and revell'd half the
I ſpeak of ancient times, for now the ſwain
Returning late may paſs the woods in vain,
And never hope to ſee the nightly train:
In vain the dairy now with mints is dreſs'd,
The dairy-maid expects no fairy gueſt,
To ſkim the bowls, and after pay the feaſt.
She ſighs and ſhakes her empty ſhoes in vain,
No ſilver penny to reward her pain:

For

For prieſts with pray'rs, and other godly geer,
Have made the merry goblins diſappear;
And where they play'd their merry pranks before,
Have ſprinkled holy water on the floor:
And friars that through the wealthy regions run,
Thick as the motes that twinkle in the ſun,
Reſort to farmers rich, and bleſs their halls,
And exorciſe the beds, and croſs the walls:
This makes the fairy quires forſake the place,
When once 'tis hallow'd with the rites of grace:
But in the walks where wicked elves have been,
The learning of the pariſh now is ſeen,
The midnight parſon poſting o'er the green,
With gown tuck'd up, to wakes, for Sunday next,
With humming ale encouraging his text;
Nor wants the holy leer to country-girl betwixt.
From fiends and imps he ſets the village free,
There haunts not any incubus but he.
The maids and women need no danger fear
To walk by night, and ſanctity ſo near:
For by ſome haycock, or ſome ſhady thorn,
He bids his beads both even ſong and morn.
It ſo befel in this king Arthur's reign,
A luſty knight was pricking o'er the plain;
A bachelor he was, and of the courtly train.
It happen'd as he rode, a damſel gay
In ruſſet robes to market took her way:
Soon on the girl he caſt an amorous eye,
So ſtraight ſhe walk'd, and on her paſterns high:
If ſeeing her behind he lik'd her pace.
Now turning ſhort, he better likes her face.
He lights in haſte, and full of youthful fire,
By force accompliſh'd his obſcene deſire:
This done away he rode, not uneſpy'd,
For ſwarming at his back the country cry'd:
And once in view they never loſt the ſight,
But ſeiz'd, and pinion'd brought to court the knight.

Then courts of kings were held in high renown,
Ere made the common brothels of the town:
There, virgins honourable vows receiv'd,
But chaſte as maids in monaſteries liv'd:
The king himſelf, to nuptial ties a ſlave,
No bad example to his poets gave:
And they, not bad, but in a vicious age,
Had not, to pleaſe the prince, debauch'd the ſtage.
Now what ſhould Arthur do? He lov'd the knight,
But ſovereign monarchs are the ſource of right:
Mov'd by the damſel's tears and common cry,
He doom'd the brutal raviſher to die.
But fair Geneura roſe in his defence,
And pray'd ſo hard for mercy from the prince,
That to his queen the king, th' offender gave,
And left it in her pow'r to kill or ſave:
This gracious act the ladies all approve,
Who thought it much a man ſhould die for love;
And with their miſtreſs join'd in cloſe debate,
(Cov'ring their kindneſs with diſſembled hate;)
If not to free him, to prolong his fate.
At laſt agreed they call him by conſent
Before the queen and female parliament.
And the fair ſpeaker riſing from the chair,
Did thus the judgment of the houſe declare.
Sir knight, though I have aſk'd thy life, yet ſtill
Thy deſtiny depends upon my will:
Nor haſt thou other ſurety than the grace
Not due to thee from our offended race.
But as our kind is of a ſofter mold,
And cannot blood without a ſigh behold,
I grant thee life; reſerving ſtill the pow'r
To take the forfeit when I ſee my hour:
Unleſs thy anſwer to my next demand
Shall ſet thee free from our avenging hand.
The queſtion, whoſe ſolution I require,
Is, What the ſex of women moſt deſire?

In this diſpute thy judges are at ſtrife;
Beware; for on thy wit depends thy life.
Yet (leſt, ſurpriſed, unknowing what to ſay,
Thou damn thyſelf) we give thee farther day:
A year is thine to wander at thy will;
And learn from others, if thou want'ſt the ſkill.
But, not to hold our proffer turn'd to ſcorn,
Good ſureties will we have for thy return;
That at the time prefix'd thou ſhalt obey,
And at thy pledge's peril keep thy day.
Woe was the knight at this ſevere command;
But well he knew 'twas bootleſs to withſtand:
The terms accepted as the fair ordain,
He put in bail for his return again,
And promis'd anſwer at the day aſſign'd,
The beſt, with heav'n's aſſiſtance he could find.
His leave thus taken, on his way he went
With heavy heart, and full of diſcontent,
Miſdoubting much, and fearful of th' event.
'Twas hard the truth of ſuch a point to find,
As was not yet agreed among the kind.
Thus on he went; ſtill anxious more and more,
Aſk'd all he met, and knock'd at ev'ry door;
Enquir'd of men; but made his chief requeſt
To learn from women what they lov'd the beſt.
They anſwer'd each according to her mind
To pleaſe herſelf, not all the female kind.
One was for wealth, another was for place:
Crones, old and ugly, wiſh'd a better face.
The widow's wiſh was oftentimes to wed;
The wanton maids were all for ſport a-bed.
Some ſaid the ſex were pleas'd with handſome lies,
And ſome groſs flattery lov'd without diſguiſe:
Truth is, ſays one, he ſeldom fails to win
Who flatters well; for that's our darling ſin.
But long attendance, and a duteous mind,
Will work ev'n with the wiſeſt of the kind.

One thought the ſex's prime felicity
Was from the bonds of wedlock to be free:
Their pleaſures, hours, and actions all their own,
And uncontroll'd to give account to none.
Some wiſh a huſband-fool; but ſuch are curſt,
For fools perverſe of huſbands are the worſt:
All women would be counted chaſte and wiſe,
Nor ſhould our ſpouſes ſee, but with our eyes;
For fools will prate; and tho' they want the wit
To find cloſe faults, yet open blots will hit:
Tho' better for their eaſe to hold their tongue,
For woman-kind was never in the wrong.
So noiſe enſues, and quarrels laſt for life;
The wife abhors the fool, the fool the wife.
And ſome men ſay that great delight have we,
To be for truth extoll'd, and ſecreſy:
And conſtant in one purpoſe ſtill to dwell;
And not our huſbands counſels to reveal.
But that's a fable: for our ſex is frail,
Inventing rather than not tell a tale.
Like leaky ſieves no ſecrets we can hold:
Witneſs the famous tale that Ovid told.

Midas the king, as in his book appears,
By Phœbus was endow'd with aſs's ears,
Which under his long locks he well conceal'd,
(As monarch's vices muſt not be reveal'd)
For fear the people have 'em in the wind,
Who long ago were neither dumb nor blind:
Nor apt to think from heav'n their title ſprings,
Since Jove and Mars left off begetting kings.
This Midas knew: and durſt communicate
To none but to his wife his ears of ſtate:
One muſt be truſted, and he thought her fit,
As paſſing prudent, and a parlous wit.
To this ſagacious confeſſor he went,
And told her what a gift the gods had ſent:

But

But told it under matrimonial ſeal,
With ſtrict injunction never to reveal.
The ſecret heard, ſhe plighted him her troth,
(And ſacred ſure is every woman's oath)
The royal malady ſhould reſt unknown,
Both for her huſband's honour and her own;
But ne'ertheleſs ſhe pin'd with diſcontent;
The counſel rumbl'd till it found a vent.
The thing ſhe knew ſhe was oblig'd to hide;
By int'reſt and by oath the wife was ty'd;
But if ſhe told it not the woman dy'd.
Loth to betray a huſband and a prince,
But ſhe muſt burſt, or blab, and no pretence
Of honour ty'd her tongue from ſelf-defence.
A marſhy ground commodiouſly was near,
Thither ſhe ran, and held her breath for fear,
Leſt if a word ſhe ſpoke of any thing,
That word might be the ſecret of the king.
Thus full of counſel to the fen ſhe went,
Grip'd all the way, and longing for a vent;
Arriv'd, by pure neceſſity compell'd,
On her majeſtic marrow bones ſhe kneel'd:
Then to the water's brink ſhe laid her head,
And, as a bittour bumps within a reed,
To thee alone, O lake, ſhe ſaid, I tell,
(And, as thy queen, command thee to conceal)
Beneath his locks the king my huſband wears
A goodly royal pair of aſſes ears:
Now I have eas'd my boſom of the pain,
Till the next longing fit return again.
Thus thro' a woman was the ſecret known;
Tell us, and in effect you tell the town.
But to my tale; the knight with heavy cheer,
Wand'ring in vain, had now conſum'd the year:
One day was only left to ſolve the doubt,
Yet knew no more than when he firſt ſet out.

But

But home he muſt, and as th' award had been,
Yield up his body captive to the queen.
In this deſpairing ſtate he hap'd to ride,
As fortune led him, by a foreſt ſide:
Lonely the vale, and full of horror ſtood,
Brown with the ſhade of a religious wood:
When full before him at the noon of night,
(The moon was up, and ſhot a gleamy light)
He ſaw a quire of ladies in a round
That featly footing ſeem'd to ſkim the ground:
Thus dancing hand in hand, ſo light they were,
He knew not where they trod on earth or air.
At ſpeed he drove, and came a ſudden gueſt,
In hope where many women were, at leaſt,
Some one by chance might anſwer his requeſt.
But faſter than his horſe the ladies flew,
And in a trice were vaniſh'd out of view.
One only hag remain'd: but fouler far
Than grandame apes in Indian foreſts are;
Againſt a wither'd oak ſhe lean'd her weight,
Propp'd on her truſty ſtaff, not half upright,
And dropp'd an aukward court'ſy to the knight.
Then ſaid, what makes you, Sir, ſo late abroad
Without a guide, and this no beaten road?
Or want you ought that here you hope to find,
Or travel for ſome trouble in your mind?
The laſt I gueſs; and if I read aright,
Thoſe of our ſex are bound to ſerve a knight;
Perhaps good counſel may your grief aſſuage,
Then tell your pain; for wiſdom is in age.
To this the knight: good mother would you know
The ſecret cauſe and ſpring of all my woe?
My life muſt with to-morrow's light expire,
Unleſs I tell what women moſt deſire.
Now con'd you help me at this hard eſſay,
Or for your inborn goodneſs, or for pay;

Yours

Yours is my life, redeem'd by your advice,
Aſk what you pleaſe, and I will pay the price,
The proudeſt kerchief of the court ſhall reſt
Well ſatisfy'd of what they love the beſt.
Plight me thy faith, quoth ſhe, that what I aſk,
Thy danger over, and perform'd thy taſk,
That thou ſhalt give for hire of thy demand;
Here take thy oath, and ſeal it on my hand;
I warrant thee, on peril of my life,
Thy words ſhall pleaſe both widow, maid, and wife.
More words there needed not to move the knight,
To take her offer, and his truth to plight.
With that ſhe ſpread a mantle on the ground,
And, firſt inquiring whither he was bound,
Bade him not fear, tho' long and rough the way,
At court he ſhould arrive ere break of day;
His horſe ſhould find the way without a guide.
She ſaid: with fury they began to ride,
He on the midſt, the beldam at his ſide.
The horſe, what devil drove, I cannot tell,
But only this, they ſped their journey well:
And all the way the crone inform'd the knight,
How he ſhould anſwer the demand aright.
To court they came; the news was quickly ſpread
Of his returning to redeem his head.
The female ſenate was aſſembled ſoon
With all the mob of women of the town:
The queen ſat lord chief juſtice of the hall,
And bade the crier cite the criminal.
The knight appear'd; and ſilence they proclaim:
Then firſt the culprit anſwer'd to his name:
And, after forms of law, was laſt requir'd
To name the thing that women moſt deſir'd.
Th' offender, taught his leſſon by the way,
And by his counſel order'd what to ſay,
Thus bold began: My lady liege, ſaid he,
What all your ſex deſire is ſovereignty.

The wife affects her huſband to command;
All muſt be her's, both money, houſe, and land.
The maids are miſtreſſes ev'n in their name;
And of their ſervants full dominion claim.
This, at the peril of my head, I ſay,
A blunt plain truth, the ſex aſpires to ſway,
You to rule all, while we, like ſlaves, obey.
There was not one, or widow, maid, or wife,
But ſaid the knight had well deſerv'd his life.
Ev'n fair Geneura, with a bluſh, confeſs'd
The man had found what women love the beſt.
Upſtarts the beldam, who was there unſeen:
And, rev'rence made, accoſted thus the queen.
My liege, ſaid ſhe, before the court ariſe,
May I, poor wretch, find favour in your eyes:
To grant my juſt requeſt: 'twas I who taught
The knight this anſwer, and inſpir'd his thought,
None but a woman could a man direct
To tell us women, what we moſt affect.
But firſt I ſwore him on his knightly troth,
(And here demand performance of his oath)
To grant the boon that next I ſhould deſire;
He gave his faith, and I expect my hire:
My promiſe is fulfill'd: I ſav'd his life,
And claim his debt, to take me for his wife.
The knight was aſk'd, nor could his oath deny,
But hop'd they would not force him to comply.
The women, who would rather wreſt the laws,
Than let a ſiſter-plaintiff loſe the cauſe,
(As judges on the bench more gracious are,
And more attent to brothers of the bar)
Cry'd one and all, the ſuppliant ſhould have right,
And to the grandame hag adjudg'd the knight.
In vain he ſigh'd, and oft with tears deſir'd,
Some reaſonable ſuit might be requir'd.

But ſtill the crone was conſtant to her note;
The more he ſpoke, the more ſhe ſtretch'd her throat.
In vain he proffer'd all his goods, to ſave
His body deſtin'd to that living grave.
The liquoriſh hag rejects the pelf with ſcorn;
And nothing but the man would ſerve her turn.
Not all the wealth of Eaſtern kings, ſaid ſhe,
Have pow'r to part my plighted love, and me;
And, old and ugly as I am, and poor,
Yet never will I break the faith I ſwore;
For mine thou art by promiſe, during life,
And I thy loving and obedient wife.
My love! nay rather my damnation thou,
Said he; nor am I bound to keep my vow;
The fiend thy ſire hath ſent thee from below,
Elſe how cou'dſt thou my ſecret ſorrows know?
Avaunt, old witch, for I renounce thy bed:
The queen may take the forfeit of my head,
Ere any of my race ſo foul a crone ſhall wed.
Both heard, the judge pronounc'd againſt the knight;
So was he marry'd in his own deſpite:
And all day after hid him as an owl,
Not able to ſuſtain a ſight ſo foul.
Perhaps the reader thinks I do him wrong,
To paſs the marriage feaſt, and nuptial ſong:
Mirth there was none, the man was a la-mort,
And little courage had to make his court.
To bed they went, the bridegroom and the bride;
Was never ſuch an ill-pair'd couple ty'd:
Reſtleſs he toſs'd, and tumbled to and fro,
And roll'd, and wriggled further off for woe.
The good old wife lay ſmiling by his ſide,
And caught him in her quiv'ring arms, and cry'd,
When you my raviſh'd predeceſſor ſaw,
You were not then become this man of ſtraw;
Had you been ſuch you might have ſcap'd the law.

Is this the cuſtom of king Arthur's court?
Are all round-table knights of ſuch a ſort?
Remember I am ſhe who ſav'd your life,
Your loving, lawful, and complying wife:
Not thus you ſwore in your unhappy hour,
Nor I for this return employ'd my pow'r.
In time of need I was your faithful friend;
Nor did I ſince, nor ever will offend.
Believe me, my lov'd lord, 'tis much unkind;
What fury has poſſeſs'd your alter'd mind?
Thus on my wedding night—without pretence—
Come turn this way, or tell me my offence.
If not your wife, let reaſon's rule perſuade;
Name but my fault, amends ſhall ſoon be made.
Amends! nay that's impoſſible, ſaid he,
What change of age or uglineſs can be;
Or could Medea's magic mend thy face,
Thou art deſcended from ſo mean a race,
That never knight was match'd with ſuch diſgrace.
What wonder, madam, if I move my ſide,
When, if I turn, I turn to ſuch a bride?
And is this all that troubles you ſo ſore?
And what the devil cou'dſt thou wiſh me more?
Ah Benedicite, reply'd the crone:
Then cauſe of juſt complaining have you none.
The remedy to this were ſoon apply'd,
Wou'd you be like the bridegroom to the bride:
But, for you ſay a long deſcended race,
And, wealth and dignity, and pow'r, and place,
Make gentlemen, and that your high degree
Is much diſparag'd to be match'd with me;
Know this, my lord, nobility of blood
Is but a glitt'ring and fallacious good:
The nobleman is he whoſe noble mind
Is fill'd with inborn worth, unborrow'd from his kind.

The king of heav'n was in a manger laid;
And took his earth but from an humble maid;
Then what can birth, or mortal men, beſtow?
Since floods no higher than their fountains flow,
We, who for name and empty honour ſtrive,
Our true nobility from him derive.
Your anceſtors, who puff your mind with pride,
And vaſt eſtates to mighty titles ty'd,
Did not your honour, but their own, advance;
For virtue comes not by inheritance.
If you tralineate from your father's mind,
What are you elſe but of a baſtard-kind?
Do, as your great progenitors have done,
And by their virtues prove yourſelf their ſon,
No father can infuſe or wit or grace;
A mother comes acroſs, and mars the race.
A grandſire or a grandame taints the blood;
And ſeldom three deſcents continue good.
Were virtue by deſcent, a noble name
Cou'd never villanize his father's fame:
But, as the firſt, the laſt of all the line,
Wou'd like the ſun ev'n in deſcending ſhine;
Take fire, and bear it to the darkeſt houſe,
Betwixt king Arthur's court and Caucaſus;
If you depart, the flame ſhall ſtill remain,
And the bright blaze enlighten all the plain;
Nor, till the fuel periſh, can decay,
By nature form'd on things combuſtible to prey.
Such is not man, who, mixing better ſeed
With worſe, begets a baſe degen'rate breed:
The bad corrupts the good, and leaves behind
No trace of all the great begetter's mind.
The father ſinks within his ſon, we ſee,
And often riſes in the third degree;
If better luck a better mother give,
Chance gave us being, and by chance we live.

Such

Such as our atoms were, ev'n ſuch are we,
Or call it chance, or ſtrong neceſſity:
Thus loaded with dead weight, the will is free.
And thus it needs muſt be: for ſeed conjoin'd
Lets into nature's work th' imperfect kind;
But fire, th' enliv'ner of the general frame,
Is one, its operation ſtill the ſame.
Its principle is in itſelf: while ours
Works, as confederates war, with mingled pow'rs;
Or man or woman, which ſoever fails:
And, oft, the vigour of the worſe prevails.
Æther with ſulphur blended altars hue,
And caſts a duſky gleam of Sodom blue.
Thus, in a brute, their ancient honour ends,
And the fair mermaid in a fiſh deſcends:
The line is gone; no longer duke or earl;
But, by himſelf degraded, turns a churl.
Nobility of blood is but renown
Of thy great fathers by their virtue known,
And a long trail of light, to thee deſcending down.
If in thy ſmoke it ends, their glories ſhine;
But infamy and villanage are thine.
Then what I ſaid before is plainly ſhow'd,
The true nobility proceeds from God:
Nor left us by inheritance, but giv'n
By bounty of our ſtars, and grace of heav'n.
Thus from a captive Servius Tullius roſe,
Whom for his virtues the firſt Romans choſe:
Fabricius from their walls repell'd the foe,
Whoſe noble hands had exercis'd the plough.
From hence, my lord, and love, I thus conclude,
That tho' my homely anceſtors were rude,
Mean as I am, yet I may have the grace
To make you father of a generous race:
And noble then am I, when I begin,
In virtue cloath'd, to caſt the rags of ſin.

If poverty be my upbraided crime,
And you believe in Heav'n, there was a time
When he, the great controller of our fate,
Deign'd to be man: and liv'd in low eſtate:
Which he who had the world at his diſpoſe,
If poverty, were vice, would never chooſe.
Philoſophers have ſaid, and poets ſing.
That a glad poverty's an honeſt thing.
Content is wealth, the riches of the mind;
And happy he who can that treaſure find.
But the baſe miſer ſtarves amidſt his ſtore,
Broods on his gold, and, griping ſtill at more,
Sits ſadly pining, and believes he's poor.
The ragged beggar, tho' he want relief,
Has not to loſe, and ſings before the thief.
Want is a bitter and a hateful good,
Becauſe its virtues are not underſtood:
Yet many things, impoſſible to thought,
Have been by need to full perfection brought:
The daring of the ſoul proceeds from thence,
Sharpneſs of wit, and active diligence;
Prudence at once, and fortitude, it gives,
And, if in patience taken, mends our lives;
For ev'n that indigence, that brings me low,
Makes me myſelf, and Him above, to know.
A good which none wou'd challenge, few would chooſe,
A fair poſſeſſion, which mankind refuſe.
If we from wealth to poverty deſcend,
Want gives to know the flatt'rer from the friend.
If I am old and ugly, well for you,
No lewd adult'rer will my love purſue.
Nor jealouſy the bane of marry'd life,
Shall haunt you for a wither'd homely wife,
For age and uglineſs, as all agree,
Are the beſt guards of female chaſtity.
Yet ſince I ſee your mind is worldly bent,
I'll do my beſt to further your content.

And therefore of two gifts in my diſpoſe,
Think ere you ſpeak, I grant you leave to chooſe;
Wou'd you I ſhould be ſtill deform'd and old,
Nauſeous to touch, and loathſom to behold;
On this condition to remain for life
A careful, tender and obedient wife,
In all I can contribute to your eaſe,
And not in deed, or word, or thought diſpleaſe:
Or would you rather have me young and fair,
And take the chance that happens to your ſhare?
Temptations are in beauty, and in youth,
And how can you depend upon my truth!
Now weigh the danger with the doubtful bliſs,
And thank yourſelf, if ought ſhould fall amiſs.
Sore ſigh'd the knight, who this long ſermon heard;
At length conſid'ring all, his heart he chear'd;
And thus reply'd: My lady, and my wife,
To your wiſe conduct I reſign my life:
Chooſe you for me, for well you underſtand
The future good and ill, on either hand:
But if an humble huſband may requeſt,
Provide, and order all things for the beſt;
Yours be the care to profit, and to pleaſe:
And let your ſubject ſervant take his eaſe.
Then thus in peace, quoth ſhe, concludes the ſtrife,
Since I am turn'd the huſband, you the wife:
The matrimonial victory is mine,
Which, having fairly gain'd, I will reſign;
Forgive if I have ſaid or done amiſs,
And ſeal the bargain with a friendly kiſs:
I promis'd you but one content to ſhare,
But now I will become both good and fair,
No nuptial quarrel ſhall diſturb your eaſe;
The buſ'neſs of my life ſhall be to pleaſe:
And for my beauty, that, as time ſhall try,
But draw the curtain firſt, and caſt your eye.

He look'd, and ſaw a creature heav'nly fair,
In bloom of youth, and of a charming air.
With joy he turn'd, and ſeiz'd her iv'ry arm;
And like Pygmalion found the ſtatue warm.
Small arguments there needed to prevail,
A ſtorm of kiſſes pour'd as thick as hail.
Thus long in mutual bliſs they lay embrac'd,
And their firſt love continu'd to the laſt:
One ſunſhine was their life, no cloud between;
Nor ever was a kinder couple ſeen.
And ſo may all our lives like theirs be led;
Heav'n ſend the maids young huſbands freſh in bed:
May widows wed as often as they can,
And ever for the better change their man.
And ſome devouring plague purſue their lives,
Who will not well be govern'd by their wives.

THE CHARACTER OF A GOOD PARSON.

A Pariſh prieſt was of the pilgrim-train;
An awful, reverend, and religious man.
His eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,
And charity itſelf was in his face.
Rich was his ſoul, tho' his attire was poor;
(As God had cloth'd his own ambaſſador;)
For ſuch, on earth, his bleſs'd redeemer bore.
Of ſixty years he ſeem'd; and well might laſt
To ſixty more, but that he liv'd too faſt;
Refin'd himſelf to ſoul, to curb the ſenſe;
And made almoſt a ſin of abſtinence.
Yet, had his aſpect nothing of ſevere,
But ſuch a face as promis'd him ſincere.
Nothing reſerv'd or ſullen was to ſee:
But ſweet regards; and pleaſing ſanctity:
Mild was his accent, and his action free.
With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd;
Tho' harſh the precept, yet the people charm'd.
For letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the ſky:
And oft with holy hymns, he charm'd their ears;
(A muſic more melodious than the ſpheres.)
For David left him, when he went to reſt,
His lyre; and after him he ſung the beſt.

He

He bore his great commiſſion in his look:
But ſweetly temper'd awe; and ſoften'd all he ſpoke.
He preach'd the joys of heav'n, and pains of hell:
And warn'd the ſinner with becoming zeal;
But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.
He taught the goſpel rather than the law;
And forc'd himſelf to drive; but lov'd to draw.
For fear but freezes minds: but love, like heat,
Exhales the ſoul ſublime, to ſeek her native ſeat,
To threats the ſtubborn ſinner oft is hard,
Wrapp'd in his crimes, againſt the ſtorm prepar'd;
But, when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.
Lightning and thunder (heav'n's artillery)
As harbingers before th' almighty fly:
Thoſe but proclaim his ſtile, and diſappear;
The ſtiller ſound ſucceeds, and God is there.
The tithes, his pariſh freely paid, he took;
But never ſu'd, or curs'd with bell and book.
With patience bearing wrong; but off'ring none:
Since every man is free to loſe his own.
The country churls, according to their kind,
(Who grudge their dues, and love to be behind,)
The leſs he ſought his off'rings, pinch'd the more,
And prais'd a prieſt contented to be poor.
Yet of his little he had ſome to ſpare,
To feed the famiſh'd, and to clothe the bare:
For mortify'd he was to that degree,
A poorer than himſelf he wou'd not ſee.
True prieſts, he ſaid, and preachers of the word,
Were only ſtewards of their ſov'reign lord;
Nothing was theirs; but all the public ſtore:
Intruſted riches, to relieve the poor.
Who, ſhould they ſteal, for want of his relief,
He judg'd himſelf accomplice with the thief.

Wide

Wide was his pariſh; not contracted cloſe
In ſtreets, but here and there a ſtraggling houſe;
Yet ſtill he was at hand, without requeſt,
To ſerve the ſick; to ſuccour the diſtreſs'd:
Tempting, on foot, alone, without affright,
The dangers of a dark tempeſtuous night.
All this, the good old man perform'd alone,
Nor ſpar'd his pains; for curate he had none.
Nor durſt he truſt another with his care;
Nor rode himſelf to Paul's, the public fair.
To chaffer for preferment with his gold,
Where biſhoprics and fine cures are ſold.
But duly watch'd his flock, by night and day;
And from the prowling wolf redeemed the prey:
And hungry ſent the wily fox away.
The proud he tam'd, the penitent he chear'd:
Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd.
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought;
(A living ſermon of the truths he taught;)
For this by rules ſevere his life he ſquar'd:
That all might ſee the doctrine which they heard.
For prieſts, he ſaid, are patterns for the reſt:
(The gold of heav'n, who bear the God impreſs'd:)
But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The ſov'reign's image is no longer ſeen.
If they be foul on whom the people truſt,
Well may the baſer braſs contract a ruſt.
The prelate, for his holy life he priz'd;
The worldly pomp of prelacy deſpis'd,
His Saviour came not with a gaudy ſhow;
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience in want, and poverty of mind,
Theſe marks of church and churchmen he deſign'd
And living taught, and dying left behind.
The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn:
In purple he was crucify'd, not born.

They

They who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his ſons, but thoſe of Zebedee.
Not but he knew the ſigns of earthly pow'r
Might well become ſaint Peter's ſucceſſor;
The holy father holds a double reign,
The prince may keep his pomp, the fiſher muſt be plain.
Such was the ſaint; who ſhone with ev'ry grace,
Reflecting, Moſes like, his Maker's face.
God ſaw his image lively was expreſs'd;
And his own work, as in creation bleſs'd.
The tempter ſaw him too with envious eye;
And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
He took the time when Richard was depos'd,
And high and low with happy Harry clos'd.
This prince, though great in arms, the prieſt withſtood:
Near tho' he was, yet not the next of blood.
Had Richard unconſtrain'd, reſign'd the throne,
A king can give no more than is his own:
The title ſtood entail'd, had Richard had a ſon.
Conqueſt, an odious name, was laid aſide,
Where all ſubmitted, none the battle try'd.
The ſenſeleſs plea of right by providence
Was, by a flatt'ring prieſt, invented ſince;
And laſts no longer than the preſent ſway;
But juſtifies the next who comes in play.
The people's right remains; let thoſe who dare
Diſpute their pow'r, when they the judges are.
He join'd not in their choice, becauſe he knew
Worſe might, and often did from change enſue.
Much to himſelf he thought; but little ſpoke;
And, undepriv'd, his benefice forſook.
Now, through the land, his cure of ſouls he ſtretch'd:
And like a primitive apoſtle preach'd.
Still chearful; ever conſtant to his call;
By many follow'd; lov'd by moſt, admir'd by all.

With

With what he begg'd, his brethren he reliev'd;
And gave the charities himſelf receiv'd.
Gave, while he taught; and edify'd the more,
Becauſe he ſhew'd, by proof, 'twas eaſy to be poor.
He went not, with the crowd to ſee a ſhrine;
But fed us, by the way, with food divine.
In deference to his virtues, I forbear
To ſhew you what the reſt in orders were:
This brillant is ſo ſpotleſs, and ſo bright,
He needs no foil, but ſhines by his own proper light.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

BOCCACE.

SIGISMONDA

AND

GUISCARDO.

WHILE Norman Tancred in Salerno reign'd,
The title of a gracious prince he gain'd;
Till turn'd a tyrant in his latter days,
He loſt the luſtre of his former praiſe;
And from the bright meridian where he ſtood,
Deſcending, dipp'd his hands in lovers blood.
This prince, of Fortune's favour long poſſeſs'd,
Yet was with one fair daughter only bleſs'd;

And bleſs'd he might have been with her alone:
But oh! how much more happy had he none!
She was his care, his hope, and his delight,
Moſt in his thought, and ever in his ſight:
Next, nay beyond his life, he held her dear;
She liv'd by him, and now he liv'd in her.
For this, when ripe for marriage, he delay'd
Her nuptial bands, and kept her long a maid,
As envying any elſe ſhould ſhare a part
Of what was his, and claiming all her heart.
At length, as publie decency requir'd,
And all his vaſſals eagerly deſir'd,
With mind averſe, he rather underwent
His people's will, than give his own conſent.
So was ſhe torn, as from a lover's ſide,
And made almoſt in his deſpite a bride.
Short were her marriage joys; for in the prime
Of youth, her lord expir'd before his time;
And to her father's court in little ſpace
Reſtor'd anew, ſhe held a higher place;
More lov'd, and more exalted into grace.
This princeſs freſh and young, and fair and wiſe,
The worſhip'd idol of her father's eyes,
Did all her ſex in ev'ry grace exceed,
And had more wit beſide than women need.
Youth, health, and eaſe, and moſt an amorous mind.
To ſecond nuptials had her thoughts inclin'd:
And former joys had left a ſecret ſting behind.
But, prodigal in ev'ry other grant,
Her ſire left unſupply'd her only want;
And ſhe, betwixt her modeſty and pride,
Her wiſhes, which ſhe could not help, would hide.
Reſolv'd at laſt to loſe no longer time,
And yet to pleaſe herſelf without a crime,
She caſt her eyes around the court, to find
A worthy ſubject ſuiting to her mind,

To him in holy nuptials to be ty'd,
A ſeeming widow, and a ſecret bride.
Among the train of courtiers, one ſhe found
With all the gifts of bounteous nature crown'd,
Of gentle blood; but one whoſe niggard fate
Had ſet him far below her high eſtate;
Guiſcard his name was call'd, of blooming age,
Now ſquire to Tancred, and before his page:
To him, the choice of all the ſhining crowd,
Her heart the noble Sigiſmonda vow'd.

Yet hitherto ſhe kept her love conceal'd,
And with thoſe graces ev'ry day beheld
The graceful youth; and ev'ry day increas'd
The raging fires that burn'd within her breaſt;
Some ſecret charm did all her acts attend,
And what his fortune wanted, hers could mend;
Till, as the fire will force its outward way,
Or, in the priſon pent, conſume the prey;
So long her earneſt eyes on his were ſet,
At length their twiſted rays together met;
And he, ſurpriſed with humble joy, ſurvey'd
One ſweet regard, ſhot by the royal maid:
Not well aſſur'd, while doubtful hopes he nurs'd,
A ſecond glance came gliding like the firſt;
And he, who ſaw the ſharpneſs of the dart,
Without defence receiv'd it in his heart.
In public, tho' their paſſion wanted ſpeech,
Yet mutual looks interpreted for each;
Time, ways, and means of meeting were deny'd;
But all thoſe wants ingenious love ſupply'd.
Th' inventive God, who never fails his part,
Inſpires the wit, when once he warms the heart.

When Guiſcard next was in the circle ſeen,
Where Sigiſmonda held the place of queen,
A hollow cane within her hand ſhe brought,
But in the concave had enclos'd a note;

With this ſhe ſeem'd to play, and, as in ſport,
Toſs'd to her love, in preſence of the court;
Take it, ſhe ſaid; and when your needs require,
This little brand will ſerve to light your fire.
He took it with a bow, and ſoon divin'd
The ſeeming toy was not for nought deſign'd:
But when retir'd, ſo long with curious eyes
He view'd his preſent, that he found the prize.
Much was in little writ; and all convey'd
With cautious care, for fear to be betray'd
By ſome falſe confident, or fav'rite maid.
The time, the place, the manner how to meet,
Were all in punctual order plainly writ:
But ſince a truſt muſt be, ſhe thought it beſt
To put it out of laymen's power at leaſt;
And for their ſolemn vows prepar'd a prieſt.
Guiſcard (her ſecret purpoſe underſtood)
With joy prepar'd to meet the coming good;
Nor pains nor danger was reſolv'd to ſpare,
But uſe the means appointed by the fair.
Next the proud palace of Salerno ſtood
A mount of rough aſcent, and thick with wood.
Through this a cave was dug with vaſt expence:
The work it ſeem'd of ſome ſuſpicious prince,
Who, when abuſing power with lawleſs might,
From public juſtice would ſecure his flight.
The paſſage made by many a winding way,
Reach'd ev'n the room in which the tyrant lay.
Fit for his purpoſe, on a lower floor,
He lodg'd, whoſe iſſue was an iron door;
From whence, by ſtairs deſcending to the ground,
In the blind grot a ſafe retreat he found.
Its outlet ended in a brake o'ergrown
With brambles, choak'd by time, and now unknown.
A rift there was, which from the mountain's height
Convey'd a glimm'ring and malignant light,

A breathing-place to draw the damps away,
A twilight of an intercepted day.
The tyrant's den, whoſe uſe, tho' loſt to fame,
Was now th' apartment of the royal dame;
The cavern only to her father known,
By him was to his darling daughter ſhown.
Neglected long ſhe let the ſecret reſt,
Till love recall'd it to her lab'ring breaſt,
And hinted as the way by heav'n deſign'd
The teacher, by the means he taught, to blind.
What will not women do, when need inſpires
Their wit, or love their inclination fires!
Tho' jealouſy of ſtate the invention found,
Yet love refin'd upon the former ground.
That way, the tyrant had reſerv'd, to fly
Purſuing hate, now ſerv'd to bring two lovers nigh.
The dame, who long in vain had kept the key,
Bold by deſire, explor'd the ſecret way;
Now try'd the ſtairs, and, wading thro' the night
Search'd all the deep receſs, and iſſu'd into light.
All this her letter had ſo well explain'd,
Th' inſtructed youth might compaſs what remain'd;
The cavern's mouth alone was hard to find,
Becauſe the path diſus'd, was out of mind:
But in what quarter of the cops it lay,
His eye by certain level could ſurvey:
Yet (for the wood perplex'd with thorns he knew)
A frock of leather o'er his limbs he drew;
And thus provided, ſearch'd the brake around,
Till the choak'd entry of the cave he found.
Thus, all prepar'd, the promis'd hour arriv'd
So long expected, and ſo well contriv'd:
With love to friend, th' impatient lover went,
Fenc'd from the thorns, and trod the deep deſcent.
The conſcious prieſt, who was ſuborn'd before,
Stood ready poſted at the poſtern door;

The maids in diſtant rooms were ſent to reſt,
And nothing wanted but th' invited gueſt.
He came, and knocking thrice without delay,
The longing lady heard, and turn'd the key;
At once invaded him with all her charms,
And the firſt ſtep he made was in her arms:
The leathern outſide boiſt'rous as it was,
Gave way, and bent beneath her ſtrict embrace:
On either ſide the kiſſes flew ſo thick,
That neither he nor ſhe had breath to ſpeak.
The holy man amaz'd, at what he ſaw,
Made haſte to ſanctify the bliſs by law;
And mutter'd faſt the matrimony o'er,
For fear committed ſin ſhould get before.
His work perform'd, he left the pair alone,
Becauſe he knew he could not go too ſoon;
His preſence odious, when his taſk was done.
What thoughts he had beſeems me not to ſay;
Tho' ſome ſurmiſe he went to faſt and pray,
And needed both to drive the tempting thoughts away.

The foe once gone, they took their full delight;
'Twas reſtleſs rage, and tempeſt all the night;
For greedy love each moment would employ,
And grudg'd the ſhorteſt pauſes of their joy.

Thus were their loves auſpiciouſly begun,
And thus with ſecret care were carried on,
The ſtealth itſelf did appetite reſtore,
And look'd ſo like a ſin, it pleas'd the more.

The cave was now become a common way,
The wicket, often open'd, knew the key:
Love ripted ſecure, and long enjoy'd,
Was ever eager, and was never cloy'd.

But as extremes are ſhort, of ill and good,
And tides at higheſt mark regorge their flood;
So fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleaſure to deſtroy.

Tancred,

Tancred, who fondly lov'd, and whoſe delight
Was plac'd in his fair daughter's daily ſight,
Of cuſtom, when his ſtate affairs were done,
Would paſs his pleaſing hours with her alone;
And, as a father's privilege allow'd,
Without attendance of th' officious crow'd.
It happen'd once, that when in heat of day
He try'd to ſleep, as was his uſual way,
The baſmy ſlumber fled his wakeful eyes,
And forc'd him, in his own deſpite, to riſe:
Of ſleep forſaken, to relieve his care,
He ſought the converſation of the fair;
But with her train of damſels ſhe was gone,
In ſhady walks the ſcorching heat to ſhun:
He would not violate that ſweet receſs,
And found beſides a welcome heavineſs,
That ſeiz'd his eyes; and ſlumber, which forgot
When call'd before to come, now came unſought.
From light retir'd, behind his daughter's bed,
He for approaching ſleep compos'd his head;
A chair was ready, for that uſe deſign'd,
So quilted, that he lay at eaſe reclin'd;
The curtains cloſely drawn, the light to ſkreen,
As if he had contriv'd to lie unſeen:
Thus cover'd with an artificial night,
Sleep did his office ſoon, and ſeal'd his ſight.
With heav'n averſe in this ill omen'd hour
Was Guiſcard ſummon'd to the ſecret bow'r,
And the fair nymph, with expectation fir'd,
From her attending damſels was retir'd:
For, true to love, ſhe meaſur'd time ſo right,
As not to miſs one moment of delight.
The garden, ſeated on the level floor,
She left behind, and locking ev'ry door,
Thought all ſecure; but little did ſhe know,
Blind to her fate, ſhe had enclos'd her foe.

Attending Guiſcard, in his leathern frock,
Stood ready, with his thrice repeated knock:
Thrice with a doleful ſound the jarring grate
Rung deaf and hollow, and preſag'd their fate.
The door unlock'd, to known delight they haſte,
And, panting in each other's arms embrac'd,
Ruſh to the conſcious bed, a mutual freight,
And heedleſs preſs it with their wonted weight.
The ſudden bound awak'd the ſleeping ſire,
And ſhew'd a ſight no parent can deſire;
His opening eyes at once with odious view
The love diſcover'd, and the lover knew:
He wou'd have cry'd; but hoping that he dreamt,
Amazement ty'd his tongue, and ſtopp'd th' attempt.
Th' enſuing moment all the truth declar'd,
But now he ſtood collected and prepar'd,
For malice and revenge had put him on his guard,
So like a lion that unheeded lay,
Diſſembling ſleep, and watchful to betray,
With inward rage he meditates his prey.
The thoughtleſs pair, indulging their deſires;
Alternate, kindled, and then quench'd their fires;
Nor thinking in the ſhades of death they play'd,
Full of themſelves, themſelves alone ſurvey'd,
And, too ſecure, were by themſelves betray'd.
Long time diſſolv'd in pleaſure thus they lay,
Till nature could no more ſuffice their play;
Then roſe the youth, and thro' the cave again
Return'd; the princeſs mingled with her train.
Reſolv'd his unripe vengeance to defer,
The royal ſpy, when now the coaſt was clear;
Sought not the garden, but retir'd unſeen,
To brood in ſecret on his gather'd ſpleen,
And methodize revenge: to death he griev'd;
And, but he ſaw the crime, had ſcarce believ'd.

Th'

Th' appointment for th' enſuing night he heard;
And therefore in the cavern had prepar'd
Two brawny yeomen of his truſty guard.
Scarce had unwary Guiſcard ſet his foot
Within the foremoſt entrance of the grot,
When theſe in ſecret ambuſh ready lay;
And ruſhing on the ſudden ſeiz'd the prey:
Encumber'd with his frock, without defence,
An eaſy prize, they led the pris'ner thence,
And, as commanded, brought before the prince.
The gloomy ſire, too ſenſible of wrong,
To vent his rage in words, reſtrain'd his tongue,
And only ſaid, Thus ſervants are preferr'd,
And, truſted, thus their ſov'reigns they reward.
Had I not ſeen, had not theſe eyes receiv'd
Too clear a proof, I could not have believ'd.
He paus'd and choak'd the reſt. The youth, who ſaw
His forfeit life abandon'd to the law,
The judge th' accuſer, and th' offence to him
Who had both pow'r and will t' avenge the crime,
No vain defence prepar'd; but thus reply'd:
The faults of love by love are juſtify'd:
With unreſiſted might the monarch reigns,
He levels mountains, and he raiſes plains;
And not regarding diff'rence of degree,
Abas'd your daughter, and exalted me.
This bold return with ſeeming patience heard,
The pris'ner was remitted to the guard.
The ſullen tyrant ſlept not all the night,
But lonely walking by a winking light,
Sobb'd, wept, and groan'd, and beat his wither'd breaſt,
But would not violate his daughter's reſt;
Who long expecting lay, for bliſs prepar'd,
Liſt'ning for noiſe, and griev'd that none ſhe heard;
Oft roſe, and oft in vain employ'd the key,
And oft accus'd her lover of delay;
And paſs'd the tedious hours in anxious thoughts away.

The morrow came; and at his uſual hour
Old Tancred viſited his daughter's bower;
Her cheek (for ſuch his cuſtom was) he kiſs'd
Then bleſs'd her kneeling, and her maids diſmiſs'd.
The royal dignity thus far maintain'd,
Now left in private he no longer feign'd;
But all at once his grief and rage appear'd,
And floods of tears ran trickling down his beard.
O Sigiſmonda, he began to ſay:
Thrice he began, and thrice was forc'd to ſtay,
Till words with often trying found their way:
I thought, O Sigiſmonda, (but how blind
Are parents eyes, their children's faults to find!
Thy virtue, birth, and breeding were above
A mean deſire, and vulgar ſenſe of love;
Nor leſs than ſight and hearing could convince
So fond a father, and ſo juſt a prince,
Of ſuch an unforeſeen, and unbeliev'd offence.
Then what indignant ſorrow muſt I have,
To ſee thee lye ſubjected to my ſlave!
A man ſo ſmelling of the people's lee,
The court receiv'd him firſt for charity;
And ſince with no degree of honour grac'd,
But only ſuffer'd, where he firſt was plac'd.
A groveling inſect ſtill; and ſo deſign'd
By nature's hand, nor born of noble kind:
A thing, by neither man nor woman priz'd,
And ſcarcely known enough to be deſpis'd.
To what has heav'n reſerv'd my age? Ah! why
Should man, when nature calls, not chooſe to die,
Rather than ſtretch the ſpan of life, to find
Such ills as fate has wiſely caſt behind,
For thoſe to feel, whom fond deſire to live
Makes covetous of more than life can give!
Each has his ſhare of good; and when 'tis gone,
The gueſt, though hungry, cannot riſe too ſoon.

But

But I, expecting more, in my own wrong
Protracting life, have liv'd a day too long.
If yesterday could be recall'd again,
Ev'n now would I conclude my happy reign:
But 'tis too late, my glorious race is run,
And a dark cloud o'ertakes my setting sun.
Hadst thou not lov'd, or loving sav'd the shame,
If not the sin, by some illustrious name,
This little comfort had reliev'd my mind,
'Twas frailty, not unusual to thy kind:
But thy low fall beneath thy royal blood,
Shews downward appetite to mix with mud:
Thus not the least excuse is left for thee,
Nor the least refuge for unhappy me.
For him I have resolv'd; whom by surprize
I took, and scarce can call it, in disguise;
For such was his attire, as, with intent
Of nature, suited to his mean descent:
The harder question yet remains behind,
What pains a parent and a prince can find
To punish an offence of this degen'rate kind.
As I have lov'd, and yet I love thee more
Than ever father lov'd a child before;
So that indulgence draws me to forgive:
Nature, that gave thee life, would have thee live.
But, as a public parent of the state,
My justice, and thy crime requires, thy fate.
Fain would I choose a middle course to steer;
Nature's too kind, and justice too severe:
Speak for us both, and to the balance bring
On either side the father and the king.
Heav'n knows, my heart is bent to favour thee;
Make it but scanty weight, and leave the rest to me.
Here stopping with a sigh, he pour'd a flood
Of tears, to make his last expression good.
She who had heard him speak, nor saw alone
The secret conduct of her love was known,

But he was taken who her ſoul poſſeſs'd,
Felt all the pangs of ſorrow in her breaſt:
And little wanted, but a woman's heart,
With cries and tears had teſtified her ſmart,
But inborn worth, that fortune can controul,
New ſtrung, and ſtiffer bent her ſofter ſoul;
The heroine aſſum'd the woman's place,
Confirm'd her mind, and fortify'd her face:
Why ſhould ſhe beg, or what could ſhe pretend,
When her ſtern father had condemn'd her friend.
Her life ſhe might have had; but her deſpair
Of ſaving his, had put it paſt her care;
Reſolv'd on fate, ſhe wou'd not loſe her breath,
But, rather than not die, ſollicit death.
Fix'd on this thought, ſhe, not as women uſe,
Her fault by common frailty would excuſe;
But boldly juſtify'd her innocence,
And while the fact was own'd, deny'd th' offence:
Then with dry eyes, and with an open look,
She met his glance mid-way, and thus undaunted ſpoke,
Tancred, I neither am diſpos'd to make
Requeſt for life, nor offer'd life to take;
Much leſs deny the deed; but leaſt of all
Beneath pretended juſtice weakly fall;
My words to ſacred truth ſhall be confin'd,
My deeds ſhall ſhew the greatneſs of my mind.
That I have lov'd, I own; that ſtill I love,
I call to witneſs all the pow'rs above:
Yet more I own: to Guiſcard's love I give
The ſmall remaining time I have to live;
And if beyond this life deſire can be,
Not fate itſelf ſhall ſet my paſſion free.
This firſt avow'd; nor folly warp'd my mind,
Nor the frail texture of the female kind
Betray'd my virtue: for, too well I knew
What honour was, and honour had his due:

Before

Before the holy prieſt my vows were ty'd,
So came I not a ſtrumpet, but a bride.
This for my fame, and for the public voice:
Yet more, his merits juſtify'd my choice:
Which had they not, the firſt election thine,
That bond diſſolv'd, the next is freely mine;
Or grant I err'd, (which yet I muſt deny)
Had parents power ev'n ſecond vows to tie,
Thy little care to mend my widow'd nights,
Has forc'd me to recourſe of marriage rites,
To fill an empty ſide, and follow known delights.
What have I done in this, deſerving blame?
State-laws may alter: nature's are the ſame;
Thoſe are uſurp'd on helpleſs woman kind,
Made without our conſent, and wanting pow'r to bind.
Thou, Tancred, better ſhouldſt have underſtood,
That as thy father gave thee fleſh and blood,
So gav'ſt thou me: not from the quarry hew'd,
But of a ſofter mould, with ſenſe endu'd;
Ev'n ſofter than thy own, of ſuppler kind,
More exquiſite of taſte, and more than man refin'd.
Nor needeſt thou by thy daughter to be told,
Tho' now thy ſpritely blood with age be cold,
Thou haſt been young: and canſt remember ſtill,
That when thou hadſt the pow'r, thou hadſt the will;
And from the paſt experience of thy fires,
Canſt tell with what a tide our ſtrong deſires
Come ruſhing on in youth, and what their rage requires.
And grant thy youth was exercis'd in arms,
When love no leiſure found for ſofter charms,
My tender age in luxury was train'd,
With idle eaſe and pageants entertain'd;
My hours my own, my pleaſures unreſtrain'd.
So bred, no wonder if I took the bent
That ſeem'd ev'n warranted by thy conſent,
For, when the father is too fondly kind,
Such ſeed he ſows, ſuch harveſt ſhall he find.

Blame then thyſelf, as reaſon's laws requires,
(Since nature gave, and thou foment'ſt my fires;)
If ſtill thoſe appetites continue ſtrong,
Thou may'ſt conſider I am yet but young:
Conſider too that having been a wife,
I muſt have taſted of a better life,
And am not to be blam'd, if I renew
By lawful means the joys which then I knew.
Where was the crime, if pleaſure I procur'd,
Young, and a woman, and to bliſs inur'd!
That was my caſe, and this is my defence:
I pleas'd myſelf, I ſhunn'd incontinence,
And, urg'd by ſtrong defires, indulg'd my ſenſe.
Left to myſelf, I muſt avow, I ſtrove,
From public ſhame to ſcreen my ſecret love,
And, well acquainted with thy native pride,
Endeavour'd what I could not help, to hide;
For which a woman's wit an eaſy way ſupply'd.
How this, ſo well contriv'd, ſo cloſely laid,
Was known to thee, or by what chance betray'd,
Is not my care; to pleaſe thy pride alone,
I could have wiſh'd it had been ſtill unknown.
Nor took I Guiſcard by blind fancy led,
Or haſty choice, as many women wed;
But with delib'rate care, and ripen'd thought,
At leiſure firſt deſign'd, before I wrought:
On him I reſted, after long debate,
And not without conſid'ring, fix'd my fate:
His flame was equal, tho' by mine inſpir'd;
(For ſo the diff'rence of our birth requir'd;)
Had he been born like me, like me his love
Had firſt begun, what mine was forc'd to move:
But thus beginning, thus we perſevere;
Our paſſions yet continue what they were,
Nor length of trial makes our joys the leſs ſincere.
At this my choice, tho' not by thine allow'd,
(Thy judgment herding with the common crowd)

Thou tak'ſt unjuſt offence; and, led by them,
Doſt leſs the merit, than the man eſteem.
Too ſharply, Tancred, by thy pride betray'd,
Haſt thou againſt the laws of kind inveigh'd:
For all th' offence is in opinion plac'd,
Which deems high birth by lowly choice debas'd.
This thought alone with fury fires thy breaſt,
(For holy marriage juſtifies the reſt)
That I have ſunk the glories of the ſtate,
And mix'd my blood with a plebeian mate;
In which I wonder thou ſhould'ſt overſee
Superior cauſes, or impute to me
The fault of fortune, or the fates' decree.
Or call it heav'n's imperial pow'r alone,
Which moves on ſprings of juſtice, tho' unknown.
Yet this we ſee, tho' order'd for the beſt,
The bad exalted, and the good oppreſs'd;
Permitted laurels grace the lawleſs brow,
Th' unworthy rais'd, the worthy caſt below.
But leaving that: ſearch we the ſecret ſprings,
And backward trace the principles of things;
There ſhall we find, that when the world began,
One common maſs compos'd the mould of man;
One paſte of fleſh on all degrees beſtow'd,
And kneaded up alike with moiſtning blood.
The ſame almighty pow'r inſpir'd the frame
With kindled life, and form'd the ſouls the ſame:
The faculties of intellect and will
Diſpens'd with equal hand, diſpos'd with equal ſkill,
Like liberty indulg'd with choice of good or ill:
Thus born alike, from virtue firſt began
The diff'rence that diſtinguiſh'd man from man:
He claim'd no title from deſcent of blood,
But that which made him noble made him good:
Warm'd with more particles of heav'nly flame,
He wing'd his upward flight, and ſoar'd to fame;
The reſt remain'd below, a tribe without a name.

This law, tho' cuſtom now diverts the courſe,
As nature's inſtitute, is yet in force;
Uncancell'd, tho' diſus'd; and he, whoſe mind
Is virtuous, is alone of noble kind;
Tho' poor in fortune, of celeſtial race;
And he commits the crime who calls him baſe.
Now lay the line; and meaſure all thy court,
By inward virtue, not external port;
And find whom juſtly to prefer above
The man on whom my judgment plac'd my love:
So ſhalt thou ſee his parts and perſon ſhine;
And thus compar'd, the reſt a baſe degen'rate line.
Nor took I, when I firſt ſurvey'd thy court,
His valour, or his virtues, on report;
But truſted what I ought to truſt alone,
Relying on thy eyes, and not my own;
Thy praiſe (and thine was then the public voice)
Firſt recommended Guiſcard to my choice:
Directed thus by thee, I look'd, and found
A man I thought deſerving to be crown'd;
Firſt by my father pointed to my ſight,
Nor leſs conſpicuous by his native light;
His mind, his mein, the features of his face,
Excelling all the reſt of human race:
Theſe were thy thoughts, and thou could'ſt judge aright,
'Till int'reſt made a jaundice in thy ſight;
Or ſhould I grant thou didſt not rightly ſee;
Then thou wert firſt deceiv'd, and I deceiv'd by thee.
But if thou ſhalt alledge thro' pride of mind,
Thy blood with one of baſe condition join'd,
'Tis falſe; for 'tis not baſeneſs to be poor;
His poverty augments thy crime the more;
Upbraids thy juſtice with the ſcant regard
Of worth; whom princes praiſe, they ſhould reward.
Are theſe the kings entruſted by the crowd
With wealth, to be diſpens'd for common good?

The

The people ſweat not for their king's delight,
T' enrich a pimp, or raiſe a paraſite;
Theirs is the toil; and he who well has ſerv'd
His country, has his country's wealth deſerv'd.
Ev'n mighty monarchs oft are meanly born,
And kings by birth to loweſt rank return;
All ſubject to the pow'r of giddy chance,
For fortune can depreſs, or can advance:
But true nobility is of the mind,
Not giv'n by chance, and not to chance reſign'd.
For the remaining doubt of thy decree,
What to reſolve, and how diſpoſe of me,
Be warn'd to caſt that uſeleſs care aſide,
Myſelf alone will for myſelf provide.
If in thy doting and decrepit age,
Thy ſoul, a ſtranger in thy youth to rage,
Begins in cruel deeds to take delight,
Gorge with my blood thy barb'rous appetite;
For I ſo little am diſpos'd to pray
For life, I would not caſt a wiſh away.
Such as it is, th' offence is all my own;
And what to Guiſcard is already done,
Or to be done, is doom'd by thy decree,
That, if not executed firſt by thee,
Shall on my perſon be perform'd by me.
Away, with women weep, and leave me here,
Fix'd like a man, to die without a tear;
Or ſave, or ſlay us both this preſent hour,
'Tis all that fate has left within thy pow'r.
She ſaid; nor did her father fail to find,
In all ſhe ſpoke, the greatneſs of her mind;
Yet thought ſhe was not obſtinate to die,
Nor deem'd the death ſhe promis'd was ſo nigh:
Secure in this belief, he left the dame,
Reſolv'd to ſpare her life, and ſave her ſhame;

But that deteſted object to remove,
To wreak his vengeance, and to cure her love.
Intent on this, a ſecret order ſign'd,
The death of Guiſcard to his guards enjoin'd;
Strangling was choſen, and the night the time,
A mute revenge, and blind as was the crime:
His faithful heart, a bloody ſacrifice,
Torn from his breaſt, to glut the tyrant's eyes,
Clos'd the ſevere command: (for ſlaves to pay)
What kings decree, the ſoldier muſt obey:
Wag'd againſt foes; and when the wars are o'er,
Fit only to maintain deſpotic pow'r:
Dang'rous to freedom, and deſir'd alone
By kings, who ſeek an arbitrary throne;
Such were theſe guards; as ready to have ſlain
The prince himſelf, allur'd with greater gain;
So was the charge perform'd with better will,
By men inur'd to blood, and exercis'd in ill.
Now, tho' the ſullen fire had eas'd his mind,
The pomp of his revenge was yet behind,
A pomp prepar'd to grace the preſent he deſign'd.
A goblet rich with gems, and rough with gold,
Of depth, and breadth, the precious pledge to hold,
With cruel care he choſe: the hollow part
Inclos'd, the lid conceal'd the lover's heart:
Then of his truſted miſchiefs one he ſent,
And bade him with theſe words the gift preſent:
Thy father ſends thee this to cheer thy breaſt,
And glad thy ſight with what thou lov'ſt the beſt;
As thou haſt pleas'd his eyes, and joy'd his mind,
With what he lov'd the moſt of human kind.
Ere this the royal dame, who well had weigh'd
The conſequence of what her ſire had ſaid,
Fix'd on her fate, againſt th' expected hour,
Procur'd the means to have it in her pow'r;

For

For this, ſhe had diſtill'd with early care,
The juice of ſimples friendly to deſpair,
A magazine of death, and thus prepar'd,
Secure to die, the fatal meſſage heard:
Then ſmil'd ſevere; nor with a troubled look,
Or trembling hand the fun'ral preſent took:
Ev'n kept her count'nance, when the lid remov'd
Diſclos'd the heart, unfortunately lov'd;
She needed not be told, within whoſe breaſt
It lodg'd; the meſſage had explain'd the reſt.
Or not amaz'd, or hiding her ſurprize,
She ſternly on the bearer fix'd her eyes:
Then thus; Tell Tancred, on his daughter's part,
The gold, tho' precious, equals not the heart:
But he did well to give his beſt; and I,
Who wiſh'd a worthier urn, forgive his poverty.
At this ſhe curb'd a groan, that elſe had come,
And pauſing, view'd the preſent in the tomb;
Then, to the heart ador'd devoutly glew'd
Her lips, and raiſing it, her ſpeech renew'd:
Ev'n from my day of birth, to this, the bound
Of my unhappy being, I have found
My father's care and tenderneſs expreſs'd;
But this laſt act of love excels the reſt:
For this ſo dear a preſent, bear him back
The beſt return that I can live to make.
The meſſenger diſpatch'd, again ſhe view'd
The lov'd remains, and ſighing thus purſu'd:
Source of my life, and lord of my deſires,
In whom I liv'd, with whom my ſoul expires,
Poor heart, no more the ſpring of vital heat,
Curs'd be the hands that tore thee from thy ſeat!
The courſe is finiſh'd which thy fates decreed,
And thou from thy corporeal priſon freed:
Soon haſt thou reach'd the goal with mended pace,
A world of woes diſpatch'd in little ſpace;

Forc'd by thy worth, thy foe, in death become
Thy friend, has lodg'd thee in a coſtly tomb.
There yet remain'd thy fun'ral exequies,
The weeping tribute of thy widow's eyes,
And thoſe, indulgent heav'n has found the way
That I, before my death, have leave to pay.
My father ev'n in cruelty is kind,
Or heav'n has turn'd the malice of his mind
To better uſes than his hate deſign'd;
And made th' inſult which in his gift appears,
The means to mourn thee with my pious tears;
Which I will pay thee down, before I go,
And ſave myſelf the pains to weep below,
If ſouls can weep; tho' once I meant to meet
My fate with face unmov'd, and eyes unwet,
Yet ſince I have thee here in narrow room,
My tears ſhall ſet thee firſt afloat within thy tomb:
Then (as I know thy ſpirit hovers nigh)
Under thy friendly conduct will I fly
To regions unexplor'd, ſecure to ſhare
Thy ſtate; nor hell ſhall puniſhment appear;
And heav'n, is double heav'n, if thou art there.
She ſaid: her brimful eyes, that ready ſtood,
And only wanted will to keep a flood,
Releas'd their watry ſtore, and pour'd amain,
Like clouds low hung, a ſober ſhow'r of rain;
Mute ſolemn ſorrow, free from female noiſe,
Such as the majeſty of grief deſtroys;
For, bending o'er the cup, the tears ſhe ſhed
Seem'd by the poſture to diſcharge her head,
O'er fill'd before; and (oft her mouth apply'd
To the cold heart,) ſhe kiſs'd at once, and cry'd.
Her maids, who ſtood amaz'd, nor knew the cauſe
Of her complaining, nor whoſe heart it was;
Yet all due meaſures of her mourning kept,
Did office at the dirge, and by infection wept;

And oft enquir'd th' occaſion of her grief,
(Unanſwer'd but by ſighs) and offer'd vain relief.
At length, her ſtock of tears already ſhed,
She wip'd her eyes, ſhe rais'd her drooping head,
And thus purſu'd: O ever faithful heart,
I have perform'd the ceremonial part,
The decencies of grief; it reſts behind,
That as our bodies were, our ſouls be join'd;
To thy whate'er abode, my ſhade convey,
And as an elder ghoſt, direct the way.
She ſaid; and bade the vial to be brought,
Where ſhe before had brew'd the deadly draught:
Firſt pouring out the med'cinable bane,
The heart, her tears had rins'd, ſhe bath'd again;
Then down her throat the death ſecurely throws,
And quaffs a long oblivion of her woes.
This done, ſhe mounts the genial bed, and there
(Her body firſt compos'd with honeſt care)
Attends the welcome reſt; her hands yet hold
Cloſe to her heart the monumental gold;
Nor farther word ſhe ſpoke, but clos'd her ſight,
And quiet ſought the covert of the night.
The damſels, who the while in ſilence mourn'd,
Not knowing, nor ſuſpecting death ſuborn'd,
Yet, as their duty was, to Tancred ſent;
Who, conſcious of th' occaſion, fear'd th' event,
Alarm'd, and with preſaging heart, he came,
And drew the curtains, and expos'd the dame
To lothſome light: then with a late relief
Made vain efforts, to mitigate her grief.
She, what ſhe could, excluding day, her eyes
Kept firmly ſeal'd, and ſternly thus replies:
Tancred, reſtrain thy tears, unſought by me,
And ſorrow unavailing now to thee:
Did ever man before afflict his mind,
To ſee th' effect of what himſelf deſign'd?

Yet, if thou haſt remaining in thy heart
Some ſenſe of love, ſome unextinguiſh'd part
Of former kindneſs, largely once profeſs'd,
Let me by that adjure thy harden'd breaſt,
Not to deny thy daughter's laſt requeſt:
The ſecret love which I ſo long enjoy'd,
And ſtill conceal'd, to gratify thy pride,
Thou haſt disjoin'd; but, with my dying breath,
Seek not, I beg thee, to disjoin our death;
Where'er his corps by thy command is laid,
Thither let mine in public be convey'd;
Expos'd in open view, and ſide by ſide,
Acknowledg'd as a bridegroom and a bride.
The prince's anguiſh hinder'd his reply:
And ſhe, who felt her fate approaching nigh,
Seiz'd the cold heart, and heaving to her breaſt,
Here, precious pledge, ſhe ſaid, ſecurely reſt:
Theſe accents were her laſt; the creeping death
Benumb'd her ſenſes firſt, then ſtopp'd her breath.
Thus ſhe for diſobedience juſtly dy'd:
The ſire was juſtly puniſh'd for his pride:
The youth, leaſt guilty, ſuffer'd for th' offence,
Of duty violated to his prince;
Who late repenting of his cruel deed,
One common ſepulchre for both decreed;
Intomb'd the wretched pair in royal ſtate,
And on their monument inſcrib'd their fate.

THEODORE AND HONORIA.

OF all the cities in Romanian lands,
The chief, and moſt renown'd, Ravenna ſtands,
Adorn'd in ancient times with arms and arts,
And rich inhabitants, with gen'rous hearts.
But Theodore the brave, above the reſt,
With gifts of fortune and of nature bleſs'd,
The foremoſt place for wealth and honour held,
And all in feats of chivalry excell'd.
This noble youth to madneſs lov'd a dame,
Of high degree, Honoria was her name;
Fair as the faireſt, but of haughty mind,
And fiercer than became ſo ſoft a kind,
Proud of her birth; (for equal ſhe had none;)
The reſt ſhe ſcorn'd; but hated him alone,
His gifts, his conſtant courtſhip, nothing gain'd;
For ſhe, the more he lov'd, the more diſdain'd.
He liv'd with all the pomp he could deviſe,
At tilts and tournaments obtain'd the prize;
But found no favour in his lady's eyes:
Relentleſs as a rock, the lofty maid,
Turn'd all to poiſon, that he did or ſaid:
Nor pray'rs, nor tears, nor offer'd vows, could move;
The work went backward; and the more he ſtrove
T' advance his ſuit, the farther from her love.
Weary'd at length, and wanting remedy,
He doubted oft, and oft reſolv'd to die.

But pride ſtood ready to prevent the blow,
For who would die to gratify a foe?
His gen'rous mind diſdain'd ſo mean a fate;
That paſs'd, his next endeavour was to hate.
But vainer that relief than all the reſt,
The leſs he hop'd, with more deſire poſſeſs'd;
Love ſtood the ſiege, and would not yield his breaſt.
Change was the next, but change deceiv'd his care;
He ſought a fairer, but found none ſo fair.
He would have worn her out by ſlow degrees,
As men by faſting ſtarve th' untam'd diſeaſe:
But preſent love requir'd a preſent eaſe.
Looking he feeds alone his famiſh'd eyes,
Feeds ling'ring death, but looking not he dies.
Yet ſtill he choſe the longeſt way to fate,
Waſting at once his life, and his eſtate.
His friends beheld, and pity'd him in vain,
For what advice can eaſe a lover's pain!
Abſence, the beſt expedient they could find,
Might ſave the fortune, if not cure the mind:
This means they long propos'd, but little gain'd,
Yet after much purſuit, at length obtain'd.
Hard you may think it was to give conſent,
But ſtruggling with his own deſires he went,
With large expence, and with a pompous train,
Provided as to viſit France and Spain,
Or for ſome diſtant voyage o'er the main.
But love had clipp'd his wings, and cut him ſhort,
Confin'd within the purlieus of the court.
Three miles he went, nor farther could retreat;
His travels ended at his country-ſeat:
To Chaſſis' pleaſing plains he took his way,
There pitch'd his tents, and there reſolv'd to ſtay.
The ſpring was in the prime; the neighb'ring grove
Supply'd with birds, the choriſters of love:
Muſic unbought, that miniſter'd delight
To morning walks, and lull'd his cares by night:

There he diſcharg'd his friends; but not th' expence
Of frequent treats, and proud magnificence.
He liv'd as kings retire, tho' more at large
From public buſineſs, yet with equal charge;
With houſe, and heart ſtill open to receive;
As well content as love would give him leave:
He would have liv'd more free; but many a gueſt,
Who could forſake the friend, purſu'd the feaſt.
It happ'd one morning, as his fancy led,
Before his uſual hour he left his bed;
To walk within a lonely lawn, that ſtood
On ev'ry ſide ſurrounded by a wood:
Alone he walk'd, to pleaſe his penſive mind,
And ſought the deepeſt ſolitude to find;
'Twas in a grove of ſpreading pines he ſtray'd;
The winds within the quiv'ring branches play'd,
And dancing trees a mournful muſic made.
The place itſelf was ſuiting to his care,
Uncouth and ſavage, as the cruel fair.
He wander'd on, unknowing where he went,
Loſt in the wood, and all on love intent:
The day already half his race had run,
And ſummon'd him to due repaſt at noon,
But love could feel no hunger but his own.
Whilſt liſt'ning to the murm'ring leaves he ſtood,
More than a mile immers'd within the wood,
At once the wind was laid; the whiſp'ring ſound
Was dumb; a riſing earthquake rock'd the ground;
With deeper brown the grove was overſpread;
A ſudden horror ſeiz'd his giddy head,
And his ears tinkled, and his colour fled,
Nature was in alarm; ſome danger nigh
Seem'd threaten'd, tho' unſeen to mortal eye.
Unus'd to fear, he ſummon'd all his ſoul,
And ſtood collected in himſelf, and whole;
Not long: for ſoon a whirlwind roſe around,
And from afar he heard a ſcreaming ſound,

As of a dame diſtreſs'd, who cry'd for aid,
And fill'd with loud laments the ſecret ſhade.
A thicket cloſe beſide the grove there ſtood,
With briers and brambles choak'd, and dwarfiſh wood;
From thence the noiſe, which now approaching near,
With more diſtinguiſh'd notes invades his ear;
He rais'd his head, and ſaw a beauteous maid,
With hair diſhevell'd, iſſuing thro' the ſhade;
Stripp'd of her clothes, and e'en thoſe parts reveal'd,
Which modeſt nature keeps from ſight conceal'd.
Her face, her hands, her naked limbs were torn,
With paſſing thro' the brakes, and prickly thorn;
Two maſtiffs gaunt and grim her flight purſu'd,
And oft their faſten'd fangs in blood embru'd:
Oft they came up, and pinch'd her tender ſide,
Mercy, O mercy, heav'n, ſhe ran, and cry'd;
When heav'n was nam'd, they loos'd their hold again,
Then ſprung ſhe forth, they follow'd her amain.
Not far behind, a knight of ſwarthy face,
High on a coal-black ſteed purſu'd the chace;
With flaſhing flames his ardent eyes were fill'd,
And in his hand a naked ſword he held:
He chear'd the dogs to follow her who fled,
And vow'd revenge on her devoted head.
As Theodore was born of noble kind,
The brutal action rous'd his manly mind;
Mov'd with unworthy uſage of the maid,
He, tho' unarm'd, reſolv'd to give her aid.
A ſaplin pine he wrench'd from out the ground,
The readieſt weapon that his fury found.
Thus furniſh'd for offence, he croſs'd the way
Betwixt the graceleſs villain, and his prey.
The knight came thund'ring on, but, from afar,
Thus in imperious tone forbad the war:
Ceaſe, Theodore, to proffer vain relief,
Nor ſtop the vengeance of ſo juſt a grief;

But

But give me leave to ſeize my deſtin'd prey,
And let eternal juſtice take the way:
I but revenge my fate, diſdain'd, betray'd,
And ſuff'ring death for this ungrateful maid.
He ſaid, at once diſmounting from the ſteed;
For now the hell-hounds with ſuperior ſpeed
Had reach'd the dame, and faſt'ning on her ſide,
The ground with iſſuing ſtreams of purple dy'd.
Stood Theodore ſurpris'd in deadly fright,
With chatt'ring teeth, and briſtling hair upright;
Yet arm'd with inborn worth, whate'er, ſaid he,
Thou art, who know'ſt me better than I thee;
Or prove thy rightful cauſe, or be defy'd;
The ſpectre, fiercely ſtaring, thus reply'd:
Know, Theodore, thy anceſtry I claim,
And Guido Cavalcanti was my name.
One common ſire our fathers did beget,
My name and ſtory ſome remember yet:
Thee, then a boy, within my arms I laid,
When for my ſins I lov'd this haughty maid;
Not leſs ador'd in life, nor ſerv'd by me,
Than proud Honoria now is lov'd by thee.
What did I not her ſtubborn heart to gain?
But all my vows were anſwer'd with diſdain:
She ſcorn'd my ſorrows, and deſpis'd my pain.
Long time I dragg'd my days in fruitleſs care;
Then lothing life, and plung'd in deep deſpair,
To finiſh my unhappy life, I fell
On this ſharp ſword, and now am damn'd in hell.
Short was her joy; for ſoon th' inſulting maid
By heav'n's decree in this cold grave was laid.
And as in unrepented ſin ſhe dy'd,
Doom'd to the ſame bad place is puniſh'd for her pride:
Becauſe ſhe deem'd I well deſerv'd to die,
And made a merit of her cruelty.
There, then, we met; both try'd, and both were caſt,
And this irrevocable ſentence paſs'd;

That ſhe, whom I ſo long purſu'd in vain,
Should ſuffer from my hands a ling'ring pain:
Renew'd to life that ſhe might daily die,
I daily doom'd to follow, ſhe to fly;
No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
I ſeek her life (for love is none below:)
As often as my dogs with better ſpeed
Arreſt her flight, is ſhe to death decreed:
Then with this fatal ſword, on which I dy'd,
I pierce her open back, or tender ſide,
And tear that harden'd heart from out her breaſt,
Which, with her entrails makes my hungry hounds a feaſt.
Nor lies ſhe long, but as her fates ordain,
Springs up to life, and freſh to ſecond pain,
Is ſav'd to-day, to-morrow to be ſlain.
This, vers'd in death, th' infernal knight relates,
And then for proof fulfill'd the common fates;
Her heart and bowels thro' her back he drew,
And fed the hounds that help'd him to purſue.
Stern look'd the fiend, as fruſtrate of his will,
Not half ſuffic'd, and greedy yet to kill.
And now the ſoul expiring through the wound,
Had left the body breathleſs on the ground,
When thus the griſly ſpectre ſpoke again:
Behold the fruit of ill rewarded pain:
As many months as I ſuſtain'd her hate,
So many years is ſhe condemn'd by fate
To daily death; and ev'ry ſev'ral place
Conſcious of her diſdain, and my diſgrace,
Muſt witneſs her juſt puniſhment; and be
A ſcene of triumph and revenge to me,
As in this grove I took my laſt farewel,
As on this very ſpot of earth I fell,
As Friday ſaw me die, ſo ſhe my prey
Becomes ev'n here, on this revolving day.

Thus while he ſpoke, the virgin from the ground
Upſtarted freſh, already clos'd the wound,
And unconcern'd for all ſhe felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the ſhore:
The hell-hounds, as ungorg'd with fleſh and blood,
Purſue their prey, and ſeek their wonted food:
The fiend remounts his courſer, mends his pace;
And all the viſion vaniſh'd from the place.
Long ſtood the noble youth oppreſs'd with awe
And ſtupid at the wondrous things he ſaw,
Surpaſſing common faith, tranſgreſſing nature's law:
He would have been aſleep, and wiſh'd to wake,
But dreams, he knew, no long impreſſion make,
Tho' ſtrong at firſt; if viſion, to what end,
But ſuch as muſt his future ſtate portend?
His love the damſel, and himſelf the fiend.
But yet reflecting that it could not be
From heav'n, which cannot impious acts decree,
Reſolv'd within himſelf to ſhun the ſnare,
Which hell for his deſtruction did prepare;
And as his better genius ſhould direct,
From an ill cauſe to draw a good effect.
Inſpir'd from heav'n he homeward took his way,
Nor pall'd his new deſign with long delay:
But of his train a truſty ſervant ſent
To call his friends together at his tent.
They came, and uſual ſalutations paid,
With words premeditated thus he ſaid:
What you have often counſell'd, to remove
My vain purſuit of unregarded love;
By thrift my ſinking fortune to repair,
Tho' late yet is at laſt become my care:
My heart ſhall be my own; my vaſt expence
Reduc'd to bounds, by timely providence;
This only I require; invite for me
Honoria, with her father's family,

Her

Her friends, and mine, the cauſe I ſhall diſplay,
On Friday next; for that's th' appointed day.
Well pleas'd were all his friends, the taſk was light,
The father, mother, daughter, they invite;
Hardly the dame was drawn to this repaſt;
But yet reſolv'd, becauſe it was the laſt.
The day was come, the gueſts invited came,
And, with the reſt, th' inexorable dame:
A feaſt prepar'd with riotous expence,
Much coſt, more care, and moſt magnificence.
The place ordain'd was in that haunted grove,
Where the revenging ghoſt purſu'd his love:
The tables in a proud pavilion ſpread,
With flow'rs below; and tiſſue overhead:
The reſt in rank, Honoria chief in place,
Was artfully contriv'd to ſet her face
To front the thicket, and behold the chace.
The feaſt was ſerv'd, the time ſo well forecaſt,
That juſt when the deſert and fruits were plac'd,
The fiend's alarm began; the hollow ſound
Sung in the leaves, the foreſt ſhook around,
Air blacken'd, roll'd the thunder, groan'd the ground.
Nor long before the loud laments ariſe,
Of one diſtreſs'd, and maſtiffs mingled cries;
And firſt the dame came ruſhing thro' the wood,
And next the famiſh'd hounds that ſought their food,
And grip'd her flanks, and oft eſſay'd their jaws in blood.
Laſt came the felon, on his ſable ſteed,
Arm'd with his naked ſword, and urg'd his dogs to ſpeed.
She ran, and cry'd, her flight directly bent,
(A gueſt unbidden) to the fatal tent,
The ſcene of death, and place ordain'd for puniſhment.
Loud was the noiſe, aghaſt was ev'ry gueſt,
The women ſhriek'd, the men forſook the feaſt;

The

The hounds at nearer diſtance hoarſly bay'd;
The hunter cloſe purſu'd the viſionary maid,
She rent the heav'n with loud laments, imploring aid.
The galants to protect the lady's right,
Their fauchions brandiſh'd at the griſly ſpright;
High on his ſtirrups he provok'd the fight.
Then on the crowd he caſt a furious look,
And wither'd all their ſtrength before he ſpoke:
Back on your lives, let be, ſaid he, my prey,
And let my vengeance take the deſtin'd way:
Vain are your arms, and vainer your defence,
Againſt th' eternal doom of Providence:
Mine is th' ungrateful maid by heav'n deſign'd:
Mercy ſhe would not give, nor mercy ſhall ſhe find.
At this the former tale again he told
With thund'ring tone, and dreadful to behold:
Sunk were their hearts with horror of the crime,
Nor needed to be warn'd a ſecond time,
But bore each other back: ſome knew the face,
And all had heard the much lamented caſe
Of him who fell for love, and this the fatal place.
And now th' infernal miniſter advanc'd,
Seiz'd the due victim, and with fury lanch'd
Her back, and piercing thro' her inmoſt heart,
Drew backward as before th' offending part.
The reeking entrails next he tore away,
And to his meagre maſtiffs made a prey.
The pale aſſiſtants on each other ſtar'd,
With gaping mouths for iſſuing words prepar'd;
The ſtill-born ſounds upon the palate hung,
And dy'd imperfect on the fault'ring tongue.
The fright was general; but the female band
(A helpleſs train) in more confuſion ſtand:
With horror ſhudd'ring, on a heap they run,
Sick at the ſight of hateful juſtice done;
For conſcience rung th' alarm, and made the caſe their own.

So ſpread upon a lake with upward eye,
A plump of fowl behold their foe on high;
They cloſe their trembling troop; and all attend
On whom the ſowſing eagle will deſcend.
But moſt the proud Honoria fear'd th' event,
And thought to her alone the viſion ſent.
Her guilt preſents to her diſtracted mind
Heav'n's juſtice, Theodore's revengeful kind,
And the ſame fate to the ſame ſin aſſign'd.
Already ſees herſelf the monſter's prey,
And feels her heart and entrails torn away.
'Twas a mute ſcene of ſorrow, mix'd with fear;
Still on the table lay th' unfiniſh'd cheer:
The knight and hungry maſtiffs ſtood around,
The mangled dame lay breathleſs on the ground;
When on a ſudden, re-inſpir'd with breath,
Again ſhe roſe, again to ſuffer death;
Nor ſtaid the heli-hounds, nor the hunter ſtaid,
But follow'd as before, the flying maid:
Th' avenger took from earth th' avenging ſword,
And mounting light as air his ſable ſteed he ſpurr'd:
The clouds diſpell'd, the ſky reſum'd her light,
And Nature ſtood recover'd of her fright.
But fear, the laſt of ills, remain'd behind,
And horror heavy ſat on ev'ry mind.
Nor Theodore encourag'd more the feaſt,
But ſternly look'd, as hatching in his breaſt
Some deep deſigns; which when Honoria view'd,
The freſh impulſe her former fright renew'd:
She thought herſelf the trembling dame who fled,
And him the griſly ghoſt that ſpurr'd th' infernal ſteed:
The more diſmay'd, for when the gueſts withdrew,
Their courteous hoſt ſaluting all the crew,
Regardleſs paſs'd her o'er; nor grac'd with kind adieu.
That ſting infix'd within her haughty mind,
The downfall of her empire ſhe divin'd;
And her proud heart with ſecret ſorrow pin'd.

Home as they went, the ſad diſcourſe renew'd,
Of the relentleſs dame to death purſu'd,
And of the ſight obſcene ſo lately view'd.
None durſt arraign the righteous doom ſhe bore,
Ev'n they who pity'd moſt, yet blam'd her more:
The parallel they needed not to name,
But in the dead they damn'd the living dame.
At ev'ry little noiſe ſhe look'd behind,
For ſtill the knight was preſent to her mind:
And anxious oft ſhe ſtarted on the way,
And thought the horſeman-ghoſt came thund'ring for his prey.
Return'd ſhe took her bed with little reſt,
But in ſhort ſlumbers dreamt the fun'ral feaſt:
Awak'd, ſhe turn'd her ſide, and ſlept again;
The ſame black vapours mounted in her brain,
And the ſame dreams return'd with double pain.
Now forc'd to wake, becauſe afraid to ſleep,
Her blood all fever'd, with a furious leap
She ſprung from bed, diſtracted in her mind,
And fear'd, at ev'ry ſtep, a twitching ſpright behind.
Darkling and deſperate with a ſtagg'ring pace,
Of death afraid, and conſcious of diſgrace;
Fear, pride, remorſe, at once her heart aſſail'd,
Pride put remorſe to flight, but fear prevail'd.
Friday, the fatal day, when next it came,
Her ſoul forethought the fiend would change his game,
And her purſue, or Theodore be ſlain,
And two ghoſts join their packs to hunt her o'er the plain.
This dreadful image ſo poſſeſs'd her mind,
That deſperate any ſuccour elſe to find,
She ceas'd all farther hope; and now began
To make reflexion on th' unhappy man.
Rich, brave, and young, who paſt expreſſion lov'd,
Proof to diſdain, and not to be remov'd:

Of all the men reſpected and admir'd,
Of all the dames, except herſelf, deſir'd:
Why not of her? preferr'd above the reſt
By him with knightly deeds, and open love profeſs'd?
So had another been, where he his vows addreſs'd.
This quell'd her pride, yet other doubts remain'd,
That once diſdaining, ſhe might be diſdain'd.
The fear was juſt, but greater fear prevail'd,
Fear of her life by helliſh hounds aſſail'd:
He took a low'ring leave; but who can tell,
What outward hate might inward love conceal?
Her ſex's arts ſhe knew, and why not, then,
Might deep diſſembling have a place in men?
Here hope began to dawn; reſolv'd to try,
She fix'd on this her utmoſt remedy;
Death was behind, but hard it was to die.
'Twas time enough at laſt on death to call,
The precipice in ſight: a ſhrub was all,
That kindly ſtood betwixt to break the fatal fall.
One maid ſhe had belov'd above the reſt:
Secure of her, the ſecret ſhe confeſs'd;
And now the chearful light her fears diſpell'd,
She with no winding turns the truth conceal'd,
But put the woman off, and ſtood reveal'd:
With faults confeſs'd commiſſion'd her to go,
If pity yet had place, and reconcile her foe;
The welcome meſſage made, was ſoon receiv'd;
'Twas to be wiſh'd, and hop'd, but ſcarce believ'd;
Fate ſeem'd a fair occaſion to preſent,
He knew the ſex, and fear'd ſhe might repent,
Should he delay the moment of conſent.
There yet remain'd to gain her friends (a care
The modeſty of maidens well might ſpare;)
But ſhe with ſuch a zeal the cauſe embrac'd,
(As women, where they will, are all in haſte)

The

The father, mother, and the kin beſide,
Were overborne by fury of the tide;
With full conſent of all ſhe chang'd her ſtate;
Reſiſtleſs in her love, as in her hate.
By her example warn'd, the reſt beware;
More eaſy, leſs imperious, were the fair;
And that one hunting, which the devil deſign'd
For one fair female, loſt him half the kind.

CYMON and IPHIGENIA.

Poeta loquitur.

OLD as I am, for ladies love unfit,
The pow'r of beauty I remember yet,
Which once inflam'd my ſoul, and ſtill inſpires my wit.
If love be folly, the ſevere divine
Has felt that folly, tho' he cenſures mine;
Pollutes the pleaſures of a chaſte embrace,
Acts what I write, and propagates in grace,
With riotous exceſs, a prieſtly race.
Suppoſe him free, and that I forge th' offence,
He ſhew'd the way, perverting firſt my ſenſe:
In malice witty, and with venom fraught,
He makes me ſpeak the things I never thought.
Compute the gains of his ungovern'd zeal;
Ill ſuits his cloth the praiſe of railing well.
The world will think that what we looſely write,
Tho' now arraign'd, he read with ſome delight;
Becauſe he ſeems to chew the cud again,
When his broad comment makes the text too plain;
And teaches more in one explaining page,
Than all the double meanings of the ſtage.
What needs he paraphraſe on what we mean?
We were at worſt but wanton; he's obſcene.
I, not my fellows, nor myſelf excuſe;
But love's the ſubject of the comic muſe:
Nor can we write without it, nor would you
A tale of only dry inſtruction view;
Nor love is always of a vicious kind,
But oft to virtuous acts inflames the mind,
Awakes the ſleepy vigour of the ſoul,
And bruſhing o'er adds motion to the pool.

Love,

Love, ſtudious how to pleaſe, improves our parts
With poliſh'd manners, and adorns with arts.
Love firſt invented verſe, and form'd the rhime,
The motion meaſur'd, harmoniz'd the chime;
To lib'ral acts enlarg'd the narrow ſoul'd,
Soften'd the fierce, and made the coward bold:
The world, when waſte, he peopled with increaſe,
And warring nations reconcil'd in peace.
Ormond, the firſt, and all the fair may find,
In this one legend, to their fame deſign'd,
When beauty fires the blood, how love exalts the mind.

IN that ſweet iſle where Venus keeps her court,
And ev'ry grace, and all the loves, reſort;
Where either ſex is form'd of ſofter earth,
And takes the bent of pleaſure from their birth;
There liv'd a Cyprian lord above the reſt
Wiſe, wealthy, with a num'rous iſſue bleſs'd.
But as no gift of fortune is ſincere,
Was only wanting in a worthy heir:
His eldeſt born, a goodly youth to view,
Excell'd the reſt in ſhape and outward ſhew,
Fair, tall, his limbs with due proportion join'd,
But of a heavy, dull, degenerate mind.
His ſoul bely'd the features of his face;
Beauty was there, but beauty in diſgrace.
A clowniſh mein, a voice with ruſtic ſound,
And ſtupid eyes that ever lov'd the ground.
He look'd like nature's error, as the mind
And body were not of a piece deſign'd,
But made for two, and by miſtake in one were join'd.
The ruling rod, the father's forming care,
Were exercis'd in vain on wit's deſpair;
The more inform'd, the leſs he underſtood,
And deeper ſunk by ſtound'ring in the mud.

Now ſcorn'd of all, and grown the public ſhame,
The people from Galeſus chang'd his name,
And Cymon call'd, which ſignifies a brute;
So well his name did with his nature ſute.
His father, when he found his labour loſt,
And care employ'd, that anſwer'd not the coſt,
Choſe an ungrateful object to remove,
And loath'd to ſee what nature made him love;
So to his country farm the fool confin'd;
Rude work well ſuited with a ruſtic mind.
Thus to the wilds the ſturdy Cymon went,
A ſquire among the ſwains, and pleas'd with baniſhment.
His corn and cattle were his only care,
And his ſupreme delight, a country fair.
It happen'd on a ſummer's holiday,
That to the green-wood ſhade he took his way;
For Cymon ſhunn'd the church, and us'd not much to pray.
His quarter-ſtaff, which he could ne'er forſake
Hung half before, and half behind his back.
He trudg'd along, unknowing what he ſought,
And whiſtled as he went, for want of thought.
By chance conducted, or by thirſt conſtrain'd,
The deep receſſes of the grove he gain'd;
Where in a plain defended by the wood,
Crept thro' the matted graſs a cryſtal flood,
By which an alabaſter fountain ſtood:
And on the margin of the fount was laid
(Attended by her ſlaves) a ſleeping maid.
Like Dian and her nymphs, when tir'd with ſport,
To reſt by cool Eurotas they reſort:
The dame herſelf the goddeſs well expreſs'd,
Not more diſtinguiſh'd by her purple veſt,
Than by the charming features of her face,
And ev'n in ſlumber a ſuperior grace;

Her

Her comely limbs compos'd with decent care,
Her body ſhaded with a ſlight cymarr;
Her boſom to the view was only bare:
Where two beginning paps were ſcarcely ſpy'd,
For yet their places were but ſignify'd:
The fanning wind upon her boſom blows,
To meet the fanning wind the boſom roſe;
The fanning wind, and purling ſtreams, continue her repoſe.

The fool of nature ſtood with ſtupid eyes,
And gaping mouth, that teſtify'd ſurprize,
Fix'd on her face, nor could remove his ſight,
New as he was to love, and novice to delight:
Long mute he ſtood, and leaning on his ſtaff,
His wonder witneſs'd with an idiot laugh;
Then would have ſpoke, but by his glimmering ſenſe
Firſt found his want of words, and fear'd offence;
Doubted for what he was he ſhould be known,
By his clown accent, and his country tone.
Thro' the rude chaos thus the running light
Shot the firſt ray that pierc'd the native night:
Then day and darkneſs in the maſs were mix'd,
Till gather'd in a globe the beams were fix'd:
Laſt ſhone the ſun, who radiant in his ſphere,
Illumin'd heav'n and earth, and roll'd around the year.
So reaſon in this brutal ſoul began,
Love made him firſt ſuſpect he was a man;
Love made him doubt his broad barbarian ſound;
By love his want of words, and wit, he found;
That ſenſe of want prepar'd the future way
To knowledge, and diſclos'd the promiſe of a day.

What not his father's care, nor tutor's art,
Could plant with pains in his unpoliſh'd heart,
The beſt inſtructor, love, at once inſpir'd,
As barren grounds to fruitfulneſs are fir'd:

Love taught him ſhame, and ſhame with love at ſtrife,
Soon taught the ſweet civilities of life;
His groſs material ſoul at once could find
Somewhat in her excelling all her kind:
Exciting a deſire till then unknown,
Somewhat unfound, or found in her alone.
This made the firſt impreſſion on his mind,
Above, but juſt above, the brutal kind.
For beaſts can like, but not diſtinguiſh too,
Nor their own liking by reflection know;
Nor why they like or this, or t'other face,
Or judge of this, or that peculiar grace;
But love in groſs, and ſtupidly admire:
As flies, allur'd by light, approach the fire.
Thus our man-beaſt advancing by degrees,
Firſt likes the whole, then ſep'rates what he ſees;
On ſev'ral parts a ſev'ral praiſe beſtows,
The ruby lips, the well-proportion'd noſe,
The ſnowy ſkin, and raven-gloſſy hair,
The dimpled cheek, and forehead riſing fair,
And ev'n in ſleep itſelf, a ſmiling air.
From thence his eyes deſcending view'd the reſt,
Her plump round arms, white hands, and heaving breaſt.
Long on the laſt he dwelt, tho' ev'ry part
A pointed arrow ſped to pierce his heart.
Thus in a trice a judge of beauty grown,
(A judge erected from a country clown)
He long'd to ſee her eyes, in ſlumber hid,
And wiſh'd his own could pierce within the lid:
He would have wak'd her, but reſtrain'd his thought,
And love new-born the firſt good manners taught.
An awful fear his ardent wiſh withſtood,
Nor durſt diſturb the goddeſs of the wood.
For ſuch ſhe ſeem'd by her celeſtial face,
Excelling all the reſt of human race.

And

And things divine, by common ſenſe he knew,
Muſt be devoutly ſeen, at diſtant view:
So checking his deſire, with trembling heart
Gazing he ſtood, nor would, nor could depart;
Fix'd as a pilgrim wilder'd in his way,
Who dares not ſtir by night, for fear to ſtray,
But ſtands with awful eyes to watch the dawn of day.

At length awaking, Iphigene the fair,
(So was the beauty call'd, who caus'd his care)
Unclos'd her eyes, and double day reveal'd,
While thoſe of all her ſlaves in ſleep were ſeal'd.

The ſlav'ring cudden, propp'd upon his ſtaff,
Stood ready gaping with a grinning laugh,
To welcome her awake, nor durſt begin
To ſpeak, but wiſely kept the fool within.
Then ſhe; What makes you, Cymon, here alone?
(For Cymon's name was round the country known,
Becauſe deſcended of a noble race,
And for a ſoul ill-ſorted with his face.)

But ſtill the ſot ſtood ſilent with ſurpriſe,
With fix'd regard on her new open'd eyes,
And in his breaſt receiv'd th' invenom'd dart,
A tickling pain that pleas'd amid the ſmart.
But conſcious of her form, with quick diſtruſt
She ſaw his ſparkling eyes, and fear'd his brutal luſt:
This to prevent, ſhe wak'd her ſleepy crew,
And riſing haſty, took a ſhort adieu.

Then Cymon firſt his ruſtic voice eſſay'd,
With proffer'd ſervice to the parting maid
To ſee her ſafe; his hand ſhe long deny'd,
But took at length, aſham'd of ſuch a guide.
So Cymon led her home, and leaving there,
No more would to his country clowns repair,
But ſought his father's houſe, with better mind,
Refuſing in the farm to be confin'd.

The father wonder'd at the ſon's return,
And knew not whether to rejoice or mourn;

But doubtfully receiv'd, expecting ſtill
To learn the ſecret cauſes of his alter'd will.
Nor was he long delay'd: the firſt requeſt
He made, was like his brother's to be dreſs'd,
And as his birth requir'd, above the reſt.
With eaſe his ſuit was granted by his ſire,
Diſtinguiſhing his heir by rich attire:
His body thus adorn'd, he next deſign'd
With lib'ral arts to cultivate his mind:
He ſought a tutor of his own accord,
And ſtudy'd leſſons he before abhorr'd.
Thus the man-child advanc'd, and learn'd ſo faſt,
That in ſhort time his equals he ſurpaſs'd:
His brutal manners from his breaſt exil'd,
His mein he faſhion'd, and his tongue he fil'd;
In ev'ry exerciſe of all admir'd,
He ſeem'd, nor only ſeem'd, but was inſpir'd:
Inſpir'd by love, whoſe buſineſs is to pleaſe;
He rode, he fenc'd, he mov'd with graceful eaſe,
More fam'd for ſenſe, for courtly carriage more,
Than for his brutal folly known before.
What then of alter'd Cymon ſhall we ſay,
But that the fire which choak'd in aſhes lay,
A load too heavy for his ſoul to move,
Was upward blown below, and bruſh'd away by love.
Love made an active progreſs thro' his mind,
The duſky parts he clear'd, the groſs refin'd,
The drowſy wak'd; and as he went impreſs'd
The Maker's image on the human breaſt.
Thus was the man amended by deſire,
And tho' he lov'd perhaps with too much fire,
His father all his faults with reaſon ſcan'd,
And lik'd an error of the better hand;
Excus'd th' exceſs of paſſion in his mind,
By flames too fierce, perhaps too much refin'd;
So Cymon, ſince his fire indulg'd his will,
Impetuous lov'd, and would be Cymon ſtill;

Galeſus he diſown'd, and choſe to bear
The name of fool confirm'd, and biſhop'd by the fair.
To Cipſeus by his friends his ſuit he mov'd,
Cipſeus the father of the fair he lov'd:
But he was pre-engag'd by former ties,
While Cymon was endeavouring to be wiſe:
And Iphigene, oblig'd by former vows,
Had giv'n her faith to wed a foreign ſpouſe:
Her ſire and ſhe to Rhodian Paſimond,
Though both repenting, were by promiſe bound,
Nor could retract; and thus, as fate decreed,
Tho' better lov'd, he ſpoke too late to ſpeed.
The doom was paſt, the ſhip already ſent
Did all his tardy diligence prevent:
Sigh'd to herſelf the fair unhappy maid,
While ſtormy Cymon thus in ſecret ſaid:
The time is come for Iphigene to find
The miracle ſhe wrought upon my mind:
Her charms have made me man, her raviſh'd love
In rank ſhall place me with the bleſt above.
For mine by love, by force ſhe ſhall be mine,
Or death, if force ſhould fail, ſhall finiſh my deſign.
Reſolv'd he ſaid; and rigg'd with ſpeedy care
A veſſel ſtrong, and well equipp'd for war.
The ſecret ſhip with choſen friends he ſtor'd;
And bent to die, or conquer, went aboard.
Ambuſh'd he lay behind the Cyprian ſhore,
Waiting the ſail that all his wiſhes bore;
Nor long expected, for the following tide
Sent out the hoſtile ſhip and beauteous bride.
To Rhodes the rival bark directly ſteer'd,
When Cymon ſudden at her back appear'd,
And ſtopp'd her flight: then ſtanding on his prow
In haughty terms he thus defy'd the foe;
Or ſtrike your ſails at ſummons, or prepare
To prove the laſt extremities of war.

Thus

Thus warn'd, the Rhodians for the fight provide;
Already were the veſſels ſide by ſide,
Theſe obſtinate to ſave, and thoſe to ſeize the bride.
But Cymon ſoon his crooked grapples caſt,
Which with tenacious hold his foes embrac'd,
And, arm'd with ſword and ſhield, amid the preſs he paſs'd.
Fierce was the fight, but haſt'ning to his prey,
By force the furious lover freed his way:
Himſelf alone diſpers'd the Rhodian crew,
The weak diſdain'd, the valiant overthrew;
Cheap conqueſt for his following friends remain'd,
He reap'd the field, and they but only glean'd.
His victory confeſs'd, the foes retreat,
And caſt their weapons at the victor's feet.
Whom thus he chear'd: O Rhodian youth, I fought
For love alone, nor other booty ſought:
Your lives are ſafe; your veſſel I reſign,
Yours be your own, reſtoring what is mine:
In Iphigene I claim my rightful due,
Robb'd by my rival, and detain'd by you:
Your Paſimond a lawleſs bargain drove,
The parent could not ſell the daughter's love;
Or if he cou'd, my love diſdains the laws,
And like a king by conqueſt gains his cauſe:
Where arms take place, all other pleas are vain,
Love taught me force, and force ſhall love maintain.
You, what by ſtrength you could not keep, releaſe,
And at an eaſy ranſom buy your peace.
Fear on the conquer'd ſide ſoon ſign'd th' accord,
And Iphigene to Cymon was reſtor'd:
While to his arms the bluſhing bride he took;
To ſeeming ſadneſs ſhe compos'd her look;
As if by force ſubjected to his will,
Tho' pleas'd, diſſembling, and a woman ſtill.

And,

And, for ſhe wept, he wip'd her falling tears,
And pray'd her to diſmiſs her empty fears;
For yours I am, he ſaid, and have deſerv'd,
Your love much better whom ſo long I ſerv'd,
Than he to whom your formal father ty'd
Your vows, and ſold a ſlave, not ſent a bride.
Thus while he ſpoke, he ſeiz'd the willing prey,
As Paris bore the Spartan ſpouſe away.
Faintly ſhe ſcream'd, and ev'n her eyes confeſs'd
She rather would be thought, than was diſtreſs'd.
Who now exults but Cymon in his mind?
Vain hopes and empty joys of human kind,
Proud of the preſent, to the future blind!
Secure of fate, while Cymon plows the ſea,
And ſteers to Candy with his conquer'd prey,
Scarce the third glaſs of meaſur'd hours was run,
When like a fiery meteor ſunk the ſun;
The promiſe of a ſtorm; the ſhifting gales
Forſake by fits, and fill the flagging ſails;
Hoarſe murmurs of the main from far were heard,
And night came on, not by degrees prepar'd,
But all at once; at once the winds ariſe,
The thunders roll, the forky lightning flies.
In vain the maſter iſſues out commands,
In vain the trembling ſailors ply their hands:
The tempeſt unforeſeen prevents their care,
And from the firſt they labour in deſpair.
The giddy ſhip betwixt the winds and tides,
Forc'd back, and forwards, in a circle rides,
Stunn'd with the diff'rent blows; then ſhoots amain,
Till counterbuff'd, ſhe ſtops, and ſleeps again.
Not more aghaſt the proud archangel fell,
Plung'd from the height of heav'n to deepeſt hell,
Than ſtood the lover of his love poſſeſs'd,
Now curs'd the more, the more he had been bleſs'd;

More

More anxious for her danger, than his own,
Death he defies; but would be loſt alone.
Sad Iphigene to womaniſh complaints
Adds pious pray'rs, and wearies all the ſaints;
Ev'n if ſhe could, her love ſhe would repent,
But ſince ſhe cannot, dreads the puniſhment:
Her forfeit faith, and Paſimond betray'd,
Are ever preſent, and her crime upbraid.
She blames herſelf, nor blames her lover leſs,
Augments her anger, as her fears increaſe:
From her own back the burden would remove,
And lays the load on his ungovern'd love,
Which interpoſing durſt in heav'n's deſpite,
Invade, and violate another's right:
The pow'rs incens'd a while deferr'd his pain,
And made him maſter of his vows in vain:
But ſoon they puniſh'd his preſumptuous pride;
That for his daring enterprize ſhe dy'd;
Who rather not reſiſted, than comply'd.
Then impotent of mind, with alter'd ſenſe,
She hugg'd th' offender, and forgave th' offence,
Sex to the laſt: mean time with ſails declin'd
The wandring veſſel drove before the wind:
Toſs'd and retoſs'd, aloft, and then allow
Nor port they ſeek, nor certain courſe they know,
But ev'ry moment wait the coming blow.
Thus blindly driv'n, by breaking day they view'd
The land before them, and their fears renew'd;
The land was welcome, but the tempeſt bore
The threaten'd ſhip againſt a rocky ſhore.
A winding bay was near; to this they bent,
And juſt eſcap'd; their force already ſpent:
Secure from ſtorms, and panting from the ſea,
The land unknown at leiſure they ſurvey;
And ſaw (but ſoon their ſickly ſight withdrew)
The riſing towers of Rhodes at diſtant view;

And

And curs'd the hoſtile ſhore of Paſimond,
Sav'd from the ſeas, and ſhipwreck'd on the ground.
The frighted ſailors try'd their ſtrength in vain
To turn the ſtern, and tempt the ſtormy main;
But the ſtiff wind withſtood the lab'ring oar,
And forc'd them forward on the fatal ſhore!
The crooked keel now bites the Rhodian ſtrand,
And the ſhip moor'd conſtrains the crew to land:
Yet ſtill they might be ſafe, becauſe unknown,
But as ill fortune ſeldom comes alone,
The veſſel they diſmiſs'd was driv'n before,
Already ſhelter'd on their native ſhore;
Known each, they know; but each with change of chear;
The vanquiſh'd ſide exults; the victors fear;
Not them but theirs, made pris'ners ere they fight,
Deſpairing conqueſt, and depriv'd of flight.
The country rings around with loud alarms,
And raw in fields the rude militia ſwarms;
Mouths without hands; maintain'd at vaſt expence,
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence:
Stout once a month they march, a bluſt'ring band,
And ever, but in times of need, at hand;
This was the morn when iſſuing on the guard,
Drawn up in rank and file they ſtood prepar'd
Of ſeeming arms to make a ſhort eſſay,
Then haſten to be drunk, the bus'neſs of the day.
The cowards would have fled, but that they knew
Themſelves ſo many, and their foes ſo few;
But crowding on, the laſt the firſt impel:
Till overborn with weight the Cyprians fell.
Cymon inſlav'd, who firſt the war begun,
And Iphigene once more is loſt and won.
Deep in a dungeon was the captive caſt,
Depriv'd of day, and held in fetters faſt:
His life was only ſpar'd at their requeſt,
Whom taken he ſo nobly had releas'd:

But

But Iphigenia was the ladies care,
Each in their turn addreſs'd to treat the fair;
While Paſimond and his the nuptial feaſt prepare.
Her ſecret ſoul to Cymon was inclin'd,
But ſhe muſt ſuffer what her fates aſſign'd;
So paſſive is the church of womankind.
What worſe to Cymon could his fortune deal,
Roll'd to the loweſt ſpoke of all her wheel?
It reſted to diſmiſs the downward weight,
Or raiſe him upward to his former height;
The latter pleas'd; and love (concern'd the moſt)
Prepar'd th' amends, for what by love he loſt.
The fire of Paſimond had left a ſon,
Tho' younger, yet for courage early known,
Ormiſda call'd, to whom by promiſe ty'd,
A Rhodian beauty was the deſtin'd bride;
Caſſandra was her name, above the reſt
Renown'd for birth, with fortune amply bleſs'd.
Lyſimachus, who rul'd the Rhodian ſtate,
Was then by choice their annual magiſtrate:
He lov'd Caſſandra too with equal fire,
But fortune had not favour'd his deſire;
Croſs'd by her friends, by her not diſapprov'd,
Nor yet preferr'd, or like Ormiſda lov'd:
So ſtood th' affair: ſome little hope remain'd,
That ſhould his rival chance to loſe, he gain'd.
Mean time young Paſimond his marriage preſs'd,
Ordain'd the nuptial day, prepar'd the feaſt;
And frugally reſolv'd (the charge to ſhun,
Which would be double ſhould he wed alone)
To join his brother's bridal with his own.
Lyſimachus, oppreſs'd with mortal grief,
Receiv'd the news, and ſtudy'd quick relief:
The fatal day approach'd; if force were us'd,
The magiſtrate his public truſt abus'd;

To

To juſtice liable, as law requir'd;
For when his office ceas'd, his pow'r expir'd:
While pow'r remain'd, the means were in his hand
By force to ſeize, and then forſake the land:
Betwixt extremes he knew not how to move,
A ſlave to fame, but more a ſlave to love:
Reſtraining others, yet himſelf not free,
Made impotent by pow'r, debas'd by dignity.
Both ſides he weigh'd: but after much debate,
The man prevail'd above the magiſtrate.
Love never fails to maſter what he finds,
But works a diff'rent way in diff'rent minds,
The fool enlightens, and the wiſe he blinds.
This youth propoſing to poſſeſs and ſcape,
Began in murder, to conclude in rape:
Unprais'd by me, tho' heav'n ſometimes may bleſs
An impious act with undeſerv'd ſucceſs:
The great it ſeems are privileg'd alone
To puniſh all injuſtice but their own.
But here I ſtop, not daring to proceed,
Yet bluſh to flatter an unrighteous deed:
For crimes are but permitted, not decreed.
Reſolv'd on force, his wit the prætor bent,
To find the means that might ſecure th' event;
Nor long he labour'd, for his lucky thought
In captive Cymon found the friend he ſought;
Th' example pleas'd: the cauſe and crime the ſame;
An injur'd lover, and a raviſh'd dame.
How much he durſt he knew by what he dar'd,
The leſs he had to loſe, the leſs he car'd,
To manage loathſome life when love was the reward.
This ponder'd well, and fix'd on his intent,
In depth of night he for the priſ'ner ſent;
In ſecret ſent the public view to ſhun,
Then with a ſober ſmile he thus begun.

The pow'rs above, who bounteouſly beſtow
Their gifts and graces on mankind below,
Yet prove our merit firſt, nor blindly give
To ſuch as are not worthy to receive:
For valour and for virtue they provide
Their due reward, but firſt they muſt be try'd:
Theſe fruitful ſeeds within your mind they ſow'd;
'Twas yours t' improve the talent they beſtow'd:
They gave you to be born of noble kind,
They gave you love to lighten up your mind,
And purge the groſſer parts; they gave you care
To pleaſe, and courage to deſerve the fair.
Thus far they try'd you, and by proof they found
The grain intruſted in a grateful ground:
But ſtill the great experiment remain'd,
They ſuffer'd you to loſe the prize you gain'd;
That you might learn the gift was theirs alone:
And when reſtor'd, to them the bleſſing own.
Reſtor'd it ſoon will be; the means prepar'd,
The difficulty ſmooth'd, the danger ſhar'd:
Be but yourſelf, the care to me reſign,
Then Iphigene is yours, Caſſandra mine.
Your rival Paſimond purſues your life,
Impatient to revenge his raviſh'd wife,
But yet not his; to-morrow is behind,
And love our fortunes in one band has join'd:
Two brothers are our foes, Ormiſda mine,
As much declar'd as Paſimond is thine:
To-morrow muſt their common vows be ty'd:
With love to friend, and fortune for our guide,
Let both reſolve to die, or each redeem a bride.
Right I have none, nor haſt thou much to plead;
'Tis force, when done, muſt juſtify the deed:
Our taſk perform'd, we next prepare for flight:
And let the loſers talk in vain of right:

We

We with the fair will ſail before the wind,
If they are griev'd, I leave the laws behind.
Speak thy reſolves: if now thy courage droop,
Deſpair in priſon, and abandon hope;
But if thou dar'ſt in arms thy love regain,
(For liberty without thy love were vain:)
Then ſecond my deſign to ſeize the prey,
Or lead to ſecond rape, for well thou know'ſt the way.
Said Cymon overjoy'd, do thou propoſe
The means to fight, and only ſhew the foes:
For from the firſt, when love had fir'd my mind,
Reſolv'd I left the care of life behind.
To this the bold Lyſimachus reply'd,
Let heav'n be neuter, and the ſword decide;
The ſpouſals are prepar'd, already play
The minſtrels, and provoke the tardy day:
By this th' brides are wak'd, their grooms are dreſs'd;
All Rhodes is ſummon'd to the nuptial feaſt,
All but myſelf the ſole unbidden gueſt.
Unbidden tho' I am, I will be there,
And join'd by thee, intend to joy the fair.
Now hear the reſt; when day reſigns the light,
And chearful torches gild the jolly night,
Be ready at my call; my choſen few
With arms adminiſter'd ſhall aid thy crew.
Then entring unexpected will we ſeize
Our deſtin'd prey, from men diſſolv'd in eaſe;
By wine diſabl'd, unprepar'd for fight:
And haſt'ning to the ſeas, ſuborn our flight:
The ſeas are ours, for I command the fort,
A ſhip well man'd expects us in the port:
If they, or if their friends, the prize conteſt,
Death ſhall attend the man who dares reſiſt.
It pleas'd! the pris'ner to his hold retir'd,
His troop with equal emulation fir'd,
All fix'd to fight, and all their wonted work requir'd.

The ſun aroſe; the ſtreets were throng'd around,
The palace open'd, and the poſts were crown'd.
The double bridegroom at the door attends
Th' expected ſpouſe, and entertains the friends:
They meet, they lead to church, the prieſts invoke
The pow'rs, and feed the flames with fragrant ſmoke.
This done, they feaſt, and at the cloſe of night
By kindled torches vary their delight, [invite.
Theſe lead the lively dance, and thoſe the briming bowls

Now, at th' appointed place and hour aſſign'd,
With ſouls reſolv'd the raviſhers were join'd:
Three bands are form'd; the firſt is ſent before
To favour the retreat, and guard the ſhore;
The ſecond at the palace-gate is plac'd,
And up the lofty ſtairs aſcend the laſt:
A peaceful troop they ſeem with ſhining veſts,
But coats of mail beneath ſecure their breaſts.

Dauntleſs they enter, Cymon at their head,
And find the feaſt renew'd, the table ſpread:
Sweet voices, mix'd with inſtrumental ſounds,
Aſcend the vaulted roof, the vaulted roof rebounds.
When like the harpies ruſhing thro' the hall
The ſudden troop appears, the tables fall,
Their ſmoaking load is on the pavement thrown;
Each raviſher prepares to ſeize his own:
The brides, invaded with a rude embrace,
Shriek out for aid, confuſion fills the place.
Quick to redeem the prey their plighted lords
Advance, the palace gleams with ſhining ſwords.

But late is all defence, and ſuccour vain;
The rape is made, the raviſhers remain:
Two ſturdy ſlaves were only ſent before
To bear the purchas'd prize in ſafety to the ſhore,
The troop retires, the lovers cloſe the rear,
With forward faces not confeſſing fear;
Backward they move, but ſcorn their pace to mend;
Then ſeek the ſtairs, and with ſlow haſte deſcend.

Fierce Paſimond, their paſſage to prevent,
Thruſt full on Cymon's back in his deſcent,
The blade return'd unbath'd, and to the handle bent.
Stout Cymon ſoon remounts, and cleft in two
His rival's head with one deſcending blow:
And as the next in rank Ormiſda ſtood,
He turn'd the point; the ſword inur'd to blood,
Bor'd his unguarded breaſt, which pour'd a purple flood.
With vow'd revenge the gathering crowd purſues,
The raviſhers turn head, the fight renews;
The hall is heap'd with corps; the ſprinkled gore
Beſmears the walls, and floats the marble floor.
Diſpers'd at length the drunken ſquadron flies,
The victors to their veſſel bear the prize;
And hear behind loud groans, and lamentable cries.
The crew with merry ſhouts their anchors weigh,
Then ply their oars, and bruſh the buxom ſea,
While troops of gather'd Rhodians crowd the key.
What ſhould the people do when left alone?
The governor and government are gone.
The public wealth to foreign parts convey'd;
Some troops diſbanded, and the reſt unpaid.
Rhodes is the ſovereign of the ſea no more;
Their ſhips unrigg'd, and ſpent their naval ſtore;
They neither could defend, nor can purſue,
But grind their teeth, and caſt a helpleſs view:
In vain with darts a diſtant war they try,
Short, and more ſhort, the miſſive weapons fly.
Mean while the raviſhers their crimes enjoy,
And flying ſails and ſweeping oars employ:
The cliffs of Rhodes in little ſpace are loſt,
Jove's iſle they ſeek; nor Jove denies his coaſt.
In ſafety landed on the Candian ſhore,
With generous wines their ſpirits they reſtore:
There Cymon with his Rhodian friend reſides,
Both court, and wed at once the willing brides.

A war enſues, the Cretans own their cauſe,
Stiff to defend their hoſpitable laws:
Both parties loſe by turns; and neither wins,
Till peace propounded by a truce begins.
The kindred of the ſlain forgive the deed,
But a ſhort exile muſt for ſhow precede:
The term expir'd, from Candia they remove;
And happy each, at home, enjoys his love.

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

OVID's EPISTLES.

PREFACE.

CONCERNING

OVID's EPISTLES.

THE life of Ovid being already written in our language before the tranſlation of his Metamorphoſes, I will not preſume ſo far upon myſelf, to think I can add any thing to Mr. Sandys his undertaking. The Engliſh reader may there be ſatisfied, that he flouriſhed in the reign of Auguſtus Cæſar; that he was extracted from an ancient family of Roman Knights; that he was born to the inheritance of a ſplendid fortune; that he was deſigned to the ſtudy of the law, and had made conſiderable progreſs in it, before he quitted that profeſſion, for this of Poetry, to which he was more naturally formed. The cauſe of his baniſhment is unknown; becauſe he was himſelf unwilling further to provoke the emperor, by aſcribing it to any other reaſon, than what was pretended by Auguſtus, which was, the laſciviouſneſs of his Elegies, and his Art of Love. It is true, they are not to be excuſed in the ſeverity of manners, as being able to corrupt a larger empire, if there were any, than that of Rome: yet this may be ſaid in behalf of Ovid, that no man has ever treated the paſſion of love with ſo much delicacy of thought, and of expreſſion, or ſearched into the nature of it more philoſophically than he. And the emperor, who condemned him, had as little reaſon as another man to puniſh that fault with ſo much ſeverity, if at leaſt he were the author of a certain Epigram, which is aſcribed to him, relating to the cauſe of the firſt civil war betwixt himſelf and Marc Antony the triumvir, which

which is more fulſome than any paſſage I have met with in our Poet. To paſs by the naked familiarity of his expreſſions to Horace, which are cited in that author's life, I need only mention one notorious act of his, in taking Livia to his bed, when ſhe was not only married, but with child by her huſband then living. But deeds, it ſeems, may be juſtified by arbitrary power, when words are queſtioned in a Poet. There is another gueſs of the grammarians, as far from truth as the firſt from reaſon: they will have him baniſhed for ſome favours, which, they ſay, he received from Julia the daughter of Auguſtus, whom they think he celebrates under the name of Corinna in his Elegies: but he, who will obſerve the verſes, which are made to that miſtreſs, may gather from the whole contexture of them, that Corinna was not a woman of the higheſt quality. If Julia were then married to Agrippa, why ſhould our Poet make his petition to Iſis, for her ſafe delivery, and afterwards condole her miſcarriage; which, for ought he knew, might be by her own huſband? Or, indeed, how durſt he be ſo bold to make the leaſt diſcovery of ſuch a crime, which was no leſs than capital, eſpecially committed againſt a perſon of Agrippa's rank? Or, if it were before her marriage, he would ſure have been more diſcreet, than to have publiſhed an accident which muſt have been fatal to them both. But what moſt confirms me againſt this opinion, is, that Ovid himſelf complains, that the true perſon of Corinna was found out by the fame of his verſes to her: which if it had been Julia, he durſt not have owned; and, beſides, an immediate puniſhment muſt have followed. He ſeems himſelf more truly to have touched at the cauſe of his exile in thoſe obſcure verſes;

Cur aliquid vidi, cur noxia Lumina feci? &c.

Namely, that he had either ſeen, or was conſcious to ſomewhat, which had procured him his diſgrace. But neither am I ſatisfied, that this was the inceſt of the

the emperor with his own daughter: for Auguſtus was of a nature too vindicative, to have contented himſelf with ſo ſmall a revenge, or ſo unſafe to himſelf, as that of ſimple baniſhment; but would certainly have ſecured his crimes from public notice, by the death of him who was witneſs to them. Neither have hiſtorians given us any ſight into ſuch an action of this emperor: nor would he (the greateſt politician of his time) in all probability, have managed his crimes with ſo little ſecrecy, as not to ſhun the obſervation of any man. It ſeems more probable, that Ovid was either the confident of ſome other paſſion, or that he had ſtumbled by ſome inadvertency upon the privacies of Livia, and ſeen her in a bath: for the words

Sine veſte Dianam

agree better with Livia, who had the fame of chaſtity, than with either of the Julia's, who were both noted of incontinency. The firſt verſes, which were made by him in his youth, and recited publicly, according to the cuſtom, were, as he himſelf aſſures us, to Corinna: his baniſhment happened not till the age of fifty; from which it may be deduced, with probability enough, that the love of Corinna did not occaſion it: nay, he tells us plainly, that his offence was that of error only, not of wickedneſs; and in the ſame paper of verſes alſo, that the cauſe was notoriouſly known at Rome, though it be left ſo obſcure to after-ages.

But to leave conjectures on a ſubject ſo uncertain, and to write ſomewhat more authentic of this Poet: that he frequented the court of Auguſtus, and was well received in it, is moſt undoubted: all his Poems bear the character of a court, and appear to be written, as the French call it, *Cavalierement:* add to this, that the titles of many of his Elegies, and more of his letters in his baniſhment, are addreſſed to perſons well known to us, even at this diſtance, to have been conſiderable in that court.

Nor

Nor was his acquaintance leſs with the famous Poets of his age, than with the noble men and ladies. He tells you himſelf, in a particular account of his own life, that Macer, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, and many others of them, were his familiar friends, and that ſome of them communicated their writings to him; but that he had only ſeen Virgil.

If the imitation of nature be the buſineſs of a Poet, I know no author, who can juſtly be compared with ours, eſpecially in the deſcription of the paſſions. And, to prove this, I ſhall need no other judges than the generality of his readers: for all paſſions being inborn with us, we are almoſt equally judges, when we are concerned in the repreſentation of them. Now I will appeal to any man, who has read this Poet, whether he finds not the natural emotion of the ſame paſſion in himſelf, which the Poet deſcribes in his feigned perſons? His thoughts, which are the pictures and reſults of thoſe paſſions, are generally ſuch as naturally ariſe from thoſe diſorderly motions of our ſpirits. Yet, not to ſpeak too partially in his behalf, I will confeſs, that the copiouſneſs of his wit was ſuch, that he often writ too pointedly for his ſubject, and made his perſons ſpeak more eloquently than the violence of their paſſion would admit: ſo that he is frequently witty out of ſeaſon; leaving the imitation of nature, and the cooler dictates of his judgment, for the falſe applauſe of fancy. Yet he ſeems to have found out this imperfection in his riper age: for why elſe ſhould he complain, that his Metamorphoſes was left unfiniſhed? Nothing ſure can be added to the wit of that Poem, or of the reſt: but many things ought to have been retrenched; which, I ſuppoſe would have been the buſineſs of his age, if his misfortunes had not come too faſt upon him. But take him uncorrected, as he is tranſmitted to us, and it muſt be acknowledged, in ſpite of his Dutch friends, the commentators, even of Julius Scaliger himſelf, that Seneca's cenſure will ſtand good againſt him;

Neſcivit quod bene ceſſit relinquere;

he never knew how to give over, when he had done well, but continually varying the ſame ſenſe an hundred ways, and taking up in another place, what he had more than enough inculcated before, he ſometimes cloys his readers inſtead of ſatisfying them; and gives occaſion to his tranſlators, who dare not cover him, to bluſh at the nakedneſs of their father. This then is the allay of Ovid's writings, which is ſufficiently recompenſed by his other excellencies: nay, this very fault is not without its beauties; for the moſt ſevere cenſor cannot but be pleaſed with the prodigality of his wit, though at the ſame time he could have wiſhed that the maſter of it had been a better manager. Every thing, which he does, becomes him; and, if ſometimes he appears too gay, yet there is a ſecret gracefulneſs of youth, which accompanies his writings, though the ſtaidneſs and ſobriety of age be wanting. In the moſt material part, which is the conduct, it is certain that he ſeldom has miſcarried: for if his Elegies be compared with thoſe of Tibullus and Propertius, his cotemporaries, it will be found, that thoſe poets ſeldom deſigned before they writ: and though the language of Tibullus be more poliſhed, and the learning of Propertius, eſpecially in his fourth book, more ſet out to oſtentation; yet their common practice was to look no further before them than the next line; whence it will inevitably follow, that they can drive to no certain point, but ramble from one ſubject to another, and conclude with ſomewhat, which is not of a piece with their beginning:

Purpureus latè qui ſplendeat unus & alter
Aſſuitur pannus,

as Horace ſays: though the verſes are golden, they are but patched into the garment. But our Poet has always the goal in his eye, which directs him in his race; ſome beautiful deſign, which he firſt eſtabliſhes, and

and then contrives the means, which will naturally conduct him to his end. This will be evident to judicious readers in his Epiſtles, of which ſomewhat, at leaſt in general, will be expected.

The title of them in our late editions is Epiſtolæ Heroidum, The letters of the Heroines. But Heinſius has judged more truly, that the inſcription of our author was barely, Epiſtles; which he concludes from his cited verſes, where Ovid aſſerts this work as his own invention, and not borrowed from the Greeks, whom (as the maſters of their learning) the Romans uſually did imitate. But it appears not from their writings, that any of the Grecians ever touched upon this way, which our Poet therefore juſtly has vindicated to himſelf. I quarrel not at the word Heroidum, becauſe it is uſed by Ovid in his Art of Love:

Jupiter ad veteres ſupplex Heroidas ibat.

But, ſure, he could not be guilty of ſuch an overſight, to call his work by the name of Heroines, when there are divers men, or heroes, as, namely, Paris, Leander, and Acontius, joined in it. Except Sabinus, who writ ſome anſwers to Ovid's Letters.

(Quam celer è toto rediit meus orbe Sabinus.)

I remember not any of the Romans, who have treated on this ſubject, ſave only Propertius, and that but once, in his Epiſtle of Arethuſa to Lycotas, which is written ſo near the ſtyle of Ovid, that it ſeems to be but an imitation; and therefore ought not to defraud our Poet of the glory of his invention.

Concerning the Epiſtles, I ſhall content myſelf to obſerve theſe few particulars: firſt, that they are generally granted to be the moſt perfect pieces of Ovid, and that the ſtyle of them is tenderly paſſionate and courtly; two properties well agreeing with the perſons, which were heroines, and lovers. Yet, where the characters were lower, as in Œnone and Hero, he has kept cloſe to nature, in drawing his images after a country life, though, perhaps, he has romanized

nized his Grecian dames too much, and made them ſpeak, ſometimes, as if they had been born in the city of Rome, and under the empire of Auguſtus. There ſeems to be no great variety in the particular ſubjects which he has choſen; moſt of the Epiſtles being written from ladies, who were forſaken by their lovers: which is the reaſon that many of the ſame thoughts come back upon us in divers letters: but of the general character of women, which is modeſty, he has taken a moſt becoming care; for his amorous expreſſions go no further than virtue may allow, and therefore may be read, as he intended them, by matrons without a bluſh.

Thus much concerning the Poet: it remains that I ſhould ſay ſomewhat of poetical tranſlations in general, and give my opinion (with ſubmiſſion to better judgments) which way of verſions ſeems to be the moſt proper.

All tranſlation, I ſuppoſe, may be reduced to theſe three heads.

Firſt, that of Metaphraſe, or turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another. Thus, or near this manner, was Horace his Art of Poetry tranſlated by Ben Johnſon. The ſecond way is that of Paraphraſe, or tranſlation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the tranſlator, ſo as never to be loſt, but his words are not ſo ſtrictly followed as his ſenſe; and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. Such is Mr. Waller's tranſlation of Virgil's Fourth Æneid. The third way is that of imitation, where the tranſlator (if now he has not loſt that name) aſſumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and ſenſe, but to forſake them both as he ſees occaſion; and taking only ſome general hints from the original, to run diviſion on the ground-work, as he pleaſes. Such is Mr. Cowley's practice in turning two Odes of Pindar, and one of Horace, into Engliſh.

Concerning the firſt of theſe methods, our maſter Horace has given us this caution:

Nec

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres ———

Nor word for word too faithfully tranſlate,

as the Earl of Roſcommon has excellently rendered it. Too faithfully is, indeed, pedantically: it is a faith like that, which proceeds from ſuperſtition, blind and zealous. Take it in the expreſſion of Sir John Denham to Sir Richard Fanſhaw, on his verſion of the Paſtor Fido.

That ſervile path thou nobly doſt decline
Of tracing word by word, and line by line.
A new and nobler way thou doſt purſue,
To make tranſlations and tranſlators too:
They but preſerve the aſhes, thou the flame,
True to his ſenſe, but truer to his fame.

It is almoſt impoſſible to tranſlate verbally, and well, at the ſame time: for the Latin (a moſt ſevere and compendious language) often expreſſes that in one word, which either the barbarity, or the narrowneſs, of modern tongues cannot ſupply in more. It is frequent alſo that the conceit is couched in ſome expreſſion, which will be loſt in Engliſh.

Atque iidem venti vela fidemque ferent.

What Poet of our nation is ſo happy as to expreſs this thought literally in Engliſh, and to ſtrike wit, or almoſt ſenſe, out of it?

In ſhort, the verbal copier is incumbered with ſo many difficulties at once, that he can never diſintangle himſelf from all. He is to conſider, at the ſame time, the thought of his author, and his words, and to find out the counterpart to each in another language: and, beſides this, he is to confine himſelf to the compaſs of numbers, and the ſlavery of rhyme. It is much like dancing on ropes with fettered legs: a man can ſhun a fall by uſing caution; but the gracefulneſs of motion is not to be expected: and when we have ſaid the beſt of it, it is but a fooliſh

taſk;

taſk; for no ſober man would put himſelf into a danger for the applauſe of eſcaping without breaking his neck. We ſee Ben Johnſon could not avoid obſcurity in his literal tranſlation of Horace, attempted in the ſame compaſs of lines: nay Horace himſelf could ſcarce have done it to a Greek Poet:

Brevis eſſe laboro, obſcurus fio:

either perſpicuity or gracefulneſs will frequently be wanting. Horace has, indeed, avoided both theſe rocks in his tranſlation of the three firſt lines of Homer's Odyſſey, which he has contracted into two.

Dic mihi, muſa, virum, captæ poſt tempora Trojæ,
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit & urbes.

Muſe, ſpeak the man, who, ſince the ſiege of Troy,
So many towns, ſuch change of manners ſaw.

ROSCOMMON.

But then the ſufferings of Ulyſſes, which are a conſiderable part of that ſentence, are omitted:

[Ὃς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη:]

The conſideration of theſe difficulties, in a ſervile, literal, tranſlation, not long ſince made two of our famous wits, Sir John Denham, and Mr. Cowley, to contrive another way of turning authors into our tongue, called, by the latter of them, Imitation. As they were friends, I ſuppoſe they communicated their thoughts on this ſubject to each other; and, therefore, their reaſons for it are little different. Though the practice of one is much more moderate. I take imitation of an author, in their ſenſe, to be an endeavour of a later Poet to write like one, who has written before him, on the ſame ſubject: that is, not to tranſlate his words, or to be confin'd to his ſenſe, but only to ſet him as a pattern, and to write, as he ſuppoſes that author would have done, had he lived in our age, and in our country. Yet I dare not ſay that either of them have carried this libertine way of

rendering authors (as Mr. Cowley calls it) ſo far as my definition reaches. For in the Pindaric Odes, the cuſtoms and ceremonies of ancient Greece are ſtill preſerved. But I know not what miſchief may ariſe hereafter from the example of ſuch an innovation, when writers of unequal parts to him ſhall imitate ſo bold an undertaking. To add and to diminiſh what we pleaſe, which is the way avowed by him, ought only to be granted to Mr. Cowley, and that too only in his tranſlation of Pindar; becauſe he alone was able to make him amends, by giving him better of his own, whenever he refuſed his author's thoughts. Pindar is generally known to be a dark writer, to want connexion, (I mean as to our underſtanding) to ſoar out of ſight, and leave his reader at a gaze. So wild and ungovernable a Poet cannot be tranſlated literally; his genius is too ſtrong to bear a chain, and Samſon-like he ſhakes it off. A genius ſo elevated and unconfined as Mr. Cowley's was but neceſſary to make Pindar ſpeak Engliſh, and that was to be performed by no other way than imitation. But if Virgil, or Ovid, or any regular intelligible authors, be thus uſed, it is no longer to be called their work, when neither the thoughts nor words are drawn from the original: but inſtead of them there is ſomething new produced, which is almoſt the creation of another hand. By this way, it is true, ſomewhat that is excellent may be invented, perhaps more excellent than the firſt deſign; though Virgil muſt be ſtill excepted, when that perhaps takes place. Yet he who is inquiſitive to know an author's thoughts, will be diſappointed in his expectation. And it is not always that a man will be contented to have a preſent made him, when he expects the payment of a debt. To ſtate it fairly: imitation of an author is the moſt advantageous way for a tranſlator to ſhew himſelf, but the greateſt wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead. Sir John Denham (who adviſed more liberty than he took himſelf) gives his reaſon for his innovation, in his admirable preface before

before the tranſlation of the ſecond Æneid. "Poetry is of ſo ſubtle a ſpirit, that, in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate; and, if a new ſpirit be not added in the transfuſion, there will remain nothing but a Caput Mortuum." I confeſs this argument holds good againſt a literal tranſlation; but who defends it? Imitation and verbal verſion are in my opinion the two extremes, which ought to be avoided: and therefore, when I have propoſed the mean betwixt them, it will be ſeen how far his argument will reach.

No man is capable of tranſlating Poetry, who, beſides a genius to that art, is not a maſter both of his author's language, and of his own: nor muſt we underſtand the language only of the Poet, but his particular turn of thoughts and expreſſion, which are the characters that diſtinguiſh, and as it were individuate him from all other writers. When we are come thus far, it is time to look into ourſelves, to conform our genius to his, to give his thought either the ſame turn, if our tongue will bear it, or, if not, to vary but the dreſs, not to alter or deſtroy the ſubſtance. The like care muſt be taken of the more outward ornaments, the words. When they appear (which is but ſeldom) literally graceful, it were an injury to the author that they ſhould be changed: but ſince every language is ſo full of its own proprieties, that what is beautiful in one, is often barbarous, nay ſometimes nonſenſe in another, it would be unreaſonable to limit a tranſlator to the narrow compaſs of his author's words. It is enough if he chooſe out ſome expreſſion which does not vitiate the ſenſe. I ſuppoſe he may ſtretch his chain to ſuch a latitude; but, by innovation of thoughts, methinks, he breaks it. By this means the ſpirit of an author may be transfuſed, and yet not loſt: and thus it is plain, that the reaſon alledged by Sir John Denham has no farther force than to expreſſion: for thought, if it be tranſlated truly, cannot be loſt in another language; but the words that convey it to our apprehenſion

(which are the image and ornament of that thought) may be ſo ill choſen, as to make it appear in an unhandſome dreſs, and rob it of its native luſtre. There is, therefore, a liberty to be allowed for the expreſſion; neither is it neceſſary that words and lines ſhould be confined to the meaſure of their original. The ſenſe of an author, generally ſpeaking, is to be ſacred and inviolable. If the fancy of Ovid be luxuriant, it is his character to be ſo; and if I retrench it, he is no longer Ovid. It will be replied, that he receives advantage by this lopping of his ſuperfluous branches; but I rejoin, that a tranſlator has no ſuch right. When a painter copies from the life, I ſuppoſe he has no privilege to alter features, and lineaments, under pretence that his picture will look better: perhaps the face, which he has drawn, would be more exact, if the eyes or noſe were altered; but it is his buſineſs to make it reſemble the original. In two caſes only there may a ſeeming difficulty ariſe; that is, if the thought be notoriouſly trivial, or diſhoneſt: but the ſame anſwer will ſerve for both, that then they ought not to be tranſlated:

——*Et quæ*
Deſperes tractata niteſcere poſſe, relinquas.

Thus I have ventured to give my opinion on this ſubject againſt the authority of two great men, but I hope without offence to either of their memories; for I both loved them living, and reverence them now they are dead. But, if, after what I have urged, it be thought by better judges, that the praiſe of a tranſlation conſiſts in adding new beauties to the piece, thereby to recompence the loſs which it ſuſtains by change of language, I ſhall be willing to be taught better, and to recant. In the mean time, it ſeems to me, that the true reaſon, why we have ſo few verſions which are tolerable, is not from the too cloſe purſuing of the author's ſenſe, but becauſe there are ſo few, who have all the talents, which are requiſite for tranſlation, and that there is ſo little praiſe, and ſo ſmall encouragement, for ſo conſiderable a part of learning.

CANACE

CANACE to MACAREUS.

EPIST. XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

Macareus and Canace, ſon and daughter to Æolus, God of the Winds, loved each other inceſtuouſly: Canace was delivered of a ſon, and committed him to her nurſe, to be ſecretly conveyed away. The infant crying out, by that means was diſcovered to Æolus, who, inraged at the wickedneſs of his children, commanded the babe to be expoſed to wild beaſts on the mountains: and withal, ſent a ſword to Canace, with this meſſage, That her crimes would inſtruct her how to uſe it. With this ſword ſhe ſlew herſelf: but before ſhe died, ſhe writ the following letter to her brother Macareus, who had taken ſanctuary in the temple of Apollo.

IF ſtreaming blood my fatal letter ſtain,
Imagine, ere you read, the writer ſlain;
One hand the ſword, and one the pen employs,
And in my lap the ready paper lies.
Think in this poſture thou beholdſt me write:
In this my cruel father would delight.
O! were he preſent, that his eyes and hands!
Might ſee, and urge, the death which he commands:
Than all the raging winds more dreadful, he,
Unmov'd, without a tear, my wounds would ſee.
Jove juſtly plac'd him on a ſtormy throne,
His people's temper is ſo like his own.
The North and South, and each contending blaſt,
Are underneath his wide dominion caſt:
Thoſe he can rule; but his tempeſtuous mind
Is, like his airy kingdom, unconfin'd.
Ah! what avail my kindred Gods above,
That in their number I can reckon Jove!

What help will all my heav'nly friends afford,
When to my breaſt I lift the pointed ſword?
That hour, which join'd us, came before its time:
In death we had been one without a crime.
Why did thy flames beyond a brother's move?
Why lov'd I thee with more than ſiſter's love?
For I lov'd too; and knowing not my wound,
A ſecret pleaſure in thy kiſſes found:
My cheeks no longer did their colour boaſt,
My food grew loathſome, and my ſtrength I loſt:
Still ere I ſpoke, a ſigh would ſtop my tongue;
Short were my ſlumbers, and my nights were long.
I knew not from my love theſe griefs did grow,
Yet was, alas, the thing I did not know.
My wily nurſe by long experience found,
And firſt diſcover'd to my ſoul its wound.
'Tis love, ſaid ſhe; and then my down-caſt eyes,
And guilty dumbneſs, witneſs'd my ſurprize.
Forc'd at the laſt, my ſhameful pain I tell:
And, oh, what follow'd we both know too well!
"When half denying, more than half content,
"Embraces warm'd me to a full conſent.
"Then with tumultuous joys my heart did beat,
"And guilt that made them anxious made them great."
But now my ſwelling womb heav'd up my breaſt,
And riſing weight my ſinking limbs oppreſt.
What herbs, what plants, did not my nurſe produce,
To make abortion by their pow'rful juice?
What med'cines try'd we not, to thee unknown?
Our firſt crime common; this was mine alone.
But the ſtrong child, ſecure in his dark cell,
With nature's vigour did our arts repel.
And now the pale-fac'd empreſs of the night
Nine times had fill'd her orb with borrow'd light:
Not knowing 'twas my labour, I complain
Of ſudden ſhootings, and of grinding pain:

My

My throes came thicker, and my cries increas'd,
Which with her hand the conſcious nurſe ſuppreſs'd.
To that unhappy fortune was I come,
Pain urg'd my clamours, but fear kept me dumb.
With inward ſtruggling I reſtrain'd my cries,
And drunk the tears that trickled from my eyes.
Death was in ſight, Lucina gave no aid;
And even my dying had my guilt betray'd.
Thou cam'ſt, and in thy count'nance ſate deſpair;
Rent were thy garments all, and torn thy hair:
Yet feigning comfort, which thou couldſt not give,
(Preſt in thy arms, and whiſp'ring me to live:)
For both our ſakes, (ſaidſt thou) preſerve thy life;
Live, my dear ſiſter, and my dearer wife.
Rais'd by that name with my laſt pangs I ſtrove:
Such pow'r have words, when ſpoke by thoſe we love.
The babe, as if he heard what thou hadſt ſworn,
With haſty joy ſprung forward to be born.
What helps it to have weather'd out one ſtorm?
Fear of our father does another form.
High in his hall, rock'd in a chair of ſtate,
The king with his tempeſtuous council ſate.
Thro' this large room our only paſſage lay,
By which we could the new-born babe convey.
Swath'd in her lap, the bold nurſe bore him out,
With olive branches cover'd round about;
And, mutt'ring pray'rs, as holy rites ſhe meant,
Thro' the divided croud unqueſtion'd went.
Juſt at the door, th' unhappy infant cry'd:
The grandſire heard him, and the theft he ſpy'd.
Swift as a whirlwind to the nurſe he flies,
And deafs his ſtormy ſubjects with his cries.
With one fierce puff he blows the leaves away:
Expos'd the ſelf-diſcover'd infant lay.
The noiſe reach'd me, and my preſaging mind
Too ſoon its own approaching woes divin'd.

Not ſhips at ſea with winds are ſhaken more,
Nor ſeas themſelves, when angry tempeſts roar,
Than I, when my loud father's voice I hear:
The bed beneath me trembled with my fear.
He ruſh'd upon me, and divulg'd my ſtain;
Scarce from my murder could his hands refrain.
I only anſwer'd him with ſilent tears;
They flow'd: my tongue was frozen up with fears.
His little grand-child he commands away,
To mountain wolves and ev'ry bird of prey.
The babe cry'd out, as if he underſtood,
And begg'd his pardon with what voice he could.
By what expreſſions can my grief be ſhown?
(Yet you may gueſs my anguiſh by your own)
To ſee my bowels, and, what yet was worſe,
Your bowels too, condemn'd to ſuch a curſe!
Out went the king; my voice its freedom found,
My breaſts I beat, my blubber'd cheeks I wound.
And now appear'd the meſſenger of death;
Sad were his looks, and ſcarce he drew his breath,
To ſay, "Your father ſends you"—(with that word
His trembling hands preſented me a ſword:)
"Your father ſends you this; and lets you know,
"That your own crimes the uſe of it will ſhow."
Too well I know the ſenſe thoſe words impart:
His preſent ſhall be treaſur'd in my heart.
Are theſe the nuptial gifts a bride receives?
And this the fatal dow'r a father gives?
Thou God of Marriage, ſhun thy own diſgrace,
And take thy torch from this deteſted place:
Inſtead of that, let furies light their brands,
And fire my pile with their infernal hands.
With happier fortune may my ſiſters wed;
Warn'd by the dire example of the dead:
For thee, poor babe, what crime could they pretend?
How could thy infant innocence offend?

A guilt there was; but, oh, that guilt was mine!
Thou ſuffer'ſt for a ſin that was not thine.
Thy mother's grief and crime! but juſt enjoy'd,
Shewn to my ſight, and born to be deſtroy'd!
Unhappy offspring of my teeming womb!
Drag'd headlong from thy cradle to thy tomb!
Thy un-offending life I could not ſave,
Nor weeping could I follow to thy grave:
Nor on thy tomb could offer my ſhorn hair;
Nor ſhew the grief which tender mothers bear.
Yet long thou ſhalt not from my arms be loſt;
For ſoon I will o'ertake thy infant ghoſt.
But thou, my love, and now my love's deſpair,
Perform his fun'rals with paternal care.
His ſcatter'd limbs with my dead body burn;
And once more join us in the pious urn.
If on my wounded breaſt thou dropp'ſt a tear,
Think for whoſe ſake my breaſt that wound did bear;
And faithfully my laſt deſires fulfil,
As I perform my cruel father's will.

HELEN to PARIS.

EPIST. XVII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Helen, having received an epiſtle from Paris, returns the following anſwer: wherein ſhe ſeems at firſt to chide him for his preſumption in writing as he had done, which could only proceed from his low opinion of her virtue; then owns herſelf to be ſenſible of the paſſion, which he had expreſſed for her, though ſhe much ſuſpected his conſtancy; and at laſt diſcovers her inclination to be favourable to him: the whole letter ſhewing the extreme artifice of womankind.

WHEN looſe epiſtles violate chaſte eyes,
She half conſents, who ſilently denies.
How dares a ſtranger, with deſigns ſo vain,
Marriage and hoſpitable rights prophane?
Was it for this, your fleet did ſhelter find
From ſwelling ſeas, and ev'ry faithleſs wind?
(For tho' a diſtant country brought you forth,
Your uſage here was equal to your worth.)
Does this deſerve to be rewarded ſo?
Did you come here a ſtranger or a foe?
Your partial judgment may perhaps complain,
And think me barb'rous for my juſt diſdain.
Ill-bred then let me be, but not unchaſte,
Nor my clear fame with any ſpot defac'd.
Tho' in my face there's no affected frown,
Nor in my carriage a feign'd niceneſs ſhown,
I keep my honour ſtill without a ſtain,
Nor has my love made any coxcomb vain.
Your boldneſs I with admiration ſee;
What hope had you to gain a queen like me?

Becauſe a hero forc'd me once away,
Am I thought fit to be a ſecond prey?
Had I been won, I had deſerv'd your blame,
But ſure my part was nothing but the ſhame.
Yet the baſe theft to him no fruit did bear,
I 'ſcap'd unhurt by any thing but fear.
Rude force might ſome unwilling kiſſes gain;
But that was all he ever could obtain.
You on ſuch terms would ne'er have let me go;
Were he like you, we had not parted ſo.
Untouch'd the youth reſtor'd me to my friends,
And modeſt uſage made me ſome amends.
'Tis virtue to repent a vicious deed.
Did he repent, that Paris might ſucceed?
Sure 'tis ſome fate that ſets me above wrongs,
Yet ſtill expoſes me to buſy tongues.
I'll not complain; for who's diſpleas'd with love,
If it ſincere, diſcreet, and conſtant prove?
But that I fear; not that I think you baſe,
Or doubt the blooming beauties of my face;
But all your ſex is ſubject to deceive,
And ours, alas, too willing to believe.
Yet others yield; and love o'ercomes the beſt:
But why ſhould I not ſhine above the reſt?
Fair Leda's ſtory ſeems at firſt to be
A fit example ready form'd for me.
But ſhe was cozen'd by a borrow'd ſhape,
And under harmleſs feathers felt a rape.
If I ſhould yield, what reaſon could I uſe?
By what miſtake the loving crime excuſe?
Her fault was in her powerful lover loſt;
But of what Jupiter have I to boaſt?
Tho' you to heroes and to kings ſucceed,
Our famous race does no addition need;
And great alliances but uſeleſs prove
To one that comes herſelf from mighty Jove.

Go then, and boaſt in ſome leſs haughty place
Your Phrygian blood, and Priam's ancient race;
Which I would ſhew I valu'd, if I durſt;
You are the fifth from Jove, but I the firſt.
The crown of Troy is pow'rful, I confeſs;
But I have reaſon to think ours no leſs.
Your letter, fill'd with promiſes of all
That men can good, and women pleaſant call,
Gives expectation ſuch an ample field,
As would move Goddeſſes themſelves to yield.
But if I e'er offend great Juno's laws,
Yourſelf ſhall be the dear, the only cauſe:
Either my honour I'll to death maintain,
Or follow you, without mean thoughts of gain.
Not that ſo fair a preſent I deſpiſe;
We like the gift, when we the giver prize.
But 'tis your love moves me, which made you take
Such pains, and run ſuch hazards for my ſake.
I have perceiv'd (tho' I diſſembled too)
A thouſand things that love has made you do.
Your eager eyes would almoſt dazzle mine,
In which (wild man) your wanton thoughts would ſhine.
Sometimes you'd ſigh, ſometimes diſorder'd ſtand,
And with unuſual ardour preſs my hand;
Contrive juſt after me to take the glaſs,
Nor would you let the leaſt occaſion paſs:
When oft I fear'd, I did not mind alone,
And bluſhing ſate for things which you have done:
Then murmur'd to myſelf, He'll for my ſake
Do any thing; I hope 'twas no miſtake.
Oft have I read within this pleaſing grove,
Under my name, thoſe charming words, I love.
I, frowning, ſeem'd not to believe your flame;
But now, alas, am come to write the ſame.
If I were capable to do amiſs,
I could not but be ſenſible of this.

For

For oh! your face has ſuch peculiar charms,
That who can hold from flying to your arms!
But what I ne'er can have without offence,
May ſome bleſt maid poſſeſs with innocence.
Pleaſure may tempt, but virtue more ſhould move;
O learn of me to want the thing you love.
What you deſire is ſought by all mankind:
As you have eyes, ſo others are not blind.
Like you they ſee, like you my charms adore;
They wiſh not leſs, but you dare venture more.
Oh! had you then upon our coaſts been brought,
My virgin-love when thouſand rivals fought,
You had I ſeen, you ſhould have had my voice;
Nor could my huſband juſtly blame my choice,
For both our hopes, alas! you come too late;
Another now is maſter of my fate.
More to my wiſh I could have liv'd with you,
And yet my preſent lot can undergo.
Ceaſe to ſollicit a weak woman's will,
And urge not her you love to ſo much ill.
But let me live contented as I may,
And make not my unſpotted fame your prey.
Some right you claim, ſince naked to your eyes
Three Goddeſſes diſputed beauty's prize:
One offer'd valour, t'other crowns; but ſhe
Obtain'd her cauſe, who ſmiling promis'd me.
But firſt I am not of belief ſo light,
To think ſuch nymphs would ſhew you ſuch a ſight:
Yet granting this, the other part is feign'd;
A bribe ſo mean your ſentence had not gain'd.
With partial eyes I ſhould myſelf regard,
To think that Venus made me her reward:
I humbly am content with human praiſe;
A Goddeſs's applauſe would envy raiſe.
But be it as you ſay; for, 'tis confeſt,
The men, who flatter higheſt, pleaſe us beſt.

That

That I ſuſpect it, ought not to diſpleaſe;
For miracles are not believ'd with eaſe.
One joy I have, that I had Venus' voice;
A greater yet, that you confirm'd her choice;
That proffer'd laurels, promis'd ſovereignty,
Juno and Pallas you contemn'd for me.
Am I your empire then, and your renown?
What heart of rock, but muſt by this be won?
And yet bear witneſs, O you Pow'rs above,
How rude I am in all the arts of love!
My hand is yet untaught to write to men:
This is th' eſſay of my unpractis'd pen.
Happy thoſe nymphs, whom uſe has perfect made!
I think all crime, and tremble at a ſhade.
E'en while I write, my fearful conſcious eyes
Look often back, miſdoubting a ſurpriſe.
For now the rumour ſpreads among the croud,
At court in whiſpers, but in town aloud:
Diſſemble you, whate'er you hear 'em ſay:
To leave off loving were your better way;
Yet if you will diſſemble it, you may.
Love ſecretly: the abſence of my lord
More freedom gives, but does not all afford:
Long is his journey, long will be his ſtay;
Call'd by affairs of conſequence away.
To go, or not, when unreſolv'd he ſtood,
I bid him make what ſwift return he could:
Then kiſſing me, he ſaid, I recommend
All to thy care, but moſt my Trojan friend.
I ſmil'd at what he innocently ſaid,
And only anſwer'd, You ſhall be obey'd.
Propitious winds have borne him far from hence,
But let not this ſecure your confidence.
Abſent he is, yet abſent he commands:
You know the proverb, "Princes have long hands."
My fame's my burden; for the more I'm prais'd,
A juſter ground of jealouſy is rais'd.

Were I leſs fair, I might have been more bleſt:
Great beauty through great danger is poſſeſt.
To leave me here his venture was not hard,
Becauſe he thought my virtue was my guard.
He fear'd my face, but truſted to my life,
The beauty doubted, but believ'd the wife.
You bid me uſe th' occaſion while I can,
Put in our hands by the good eaſy man.
I would, and yet I doubt, 'twixt love and fear;
One draws me from you, and one brings me near.
Our flames are mutual, and my huſband's gone:
The nights are long; I fear to lie alone.
One houſe contains us, and weak walls divide,
And you're too preſſing to be long deny'd.
Let me not live, but ev'ry thing conſpires
To join our loves, and yet my fear retires.
You court with words, when you ſhould force employ:
A rape is requiſite to ſhame-fac'd joy.
Indulgent to the wrongs which we receive,
Our ſex can ſuffer what we dare not give.
What have I ſaid? for both of us 'twere beſt,
Our kindling fire if each of us ſuppreſt.
The faith of ſtrangers is too prone to change,
And, like themſelves, their wand'ring paſſions range.
Hypſipile, and the fond Minonian maid,
Were both by truſting of their gueſts betray'd.
How can I doubt that other men deceive,
When you yourſelf did fair Oenone leave?
But leſt I ſhould upbraid your treachery,
You make a merit of that crime to me.
Yet grant you were to faithful love inclin'd,
Your weary Trojans wait but for a wind.
Should you prevail; while I aſſign the night,
Your ſails are hoiſted, and you take your flight:
Some bawling mariner our love deſtroys,
And breaks aſunder our unfiniſh'd joys.

But

But I with you may leave the Spartan port,
To view the Trojan wealth and Priam's court:
Shown while I ſee, I ſhall expoſe my fame,
And fill a foreign country with my ſhame.
In Aſia what reception ſhall I find?
And what diſhonour leave in Grecce behind?
What will your brothers, Priam, Hecuba,
And what will all your modeſt matrons ſay?
E'en you, when on this action you reflect,
My future conduct juſtly may ſuſpect;
And whate'er ſtranger lands upon your coaſt,
Conclude me, by your own example, loſt.
I from your rage a ſtrumpet's name ſhall hear,
While you forget what part in it you bear.
You, my crime's author, will my crime upbraid:
Deep under ground, oh, let me firſt be laid!
You boaſt the pomp and plenty of your land,
And promiſe all ſhall be at my command:
Your Trojan wealth, believe me, I deſpiſe;
My own poor native land has dearer ties.
Should I be injur'd on your Phrygian ſhore,
What help of kindred could I there implore?
Medea was by Jaſon's flatt'ry won:
I may, like her, believe, and be undone.
Plain honeſt hearts, like mine, ſuſpect no cheat,
And love contributes to its own deceit.
The ſhips, about whoſe ſides loud tempeſts roar,
With gentle winds were wafted from the ſhore.
Your teeming mother dream'd a flaming brand,
Sprung from her womb, conſum'd the Trojan land.
To ſecond this, old prophecies conſpire,
That Ilium ſhall be burnt with Grecian fire,
Both give me fear; nor is it much allay'd,
That Venus is oblig'd our loves to aid.
For they, who loſt their cauſe, revenge will take;
And for one friend two enemies you make.

Nor

Nor can I doubt, but, ſhould I follow you,
The ſword would ſoon our fatal crime purſue.
A wrong ſo great my huſband's rage would rouſe,
And my relations would his cauſe eſpouſe.
You boaſt your ſtrength and courage; but, alas!
Your words receive ſmall credit from your face.
Let heroes in the duſty field delight,
Thoſe limbs were faſhion'd for another fight.
Bid Hector ſally from the walls of Troy;
A ſweeter quarrel ſhould your arms employ.
Yet fears like theſe ſhould not my mind perplex,
Were I as wiſe as many of my ſex.
But time and you may bolder thoughts inſpire;
And I perhaps may yield to your deſire.
You laſt demand a private conference;
Theſe are your words, but I can gueſs your ſenſe.
Your unripe hopes their harveſt muſt attend:
Be rul'd by me, and time may be your friend.
This is enough to let you underſtand;
For now my pen has tir'd my tender hand:
My woman knows the ſecret of my heart,
And may hereafter better news impart.

DIDO to ÆNEAS.

EPIST. VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Æneas, the ſon of Venus and Anchiſes, having, at the deſtruction of Troy, ſaved his Gods, his father, and ſon Aſcanius, from the fire, put to ſea with twenty ſail of ſhips; and, having been long toſt with tempeſts, was at laſt caſt upon the ſhore of Libya, where queen Dido (flying from the cruelty of Pygmalion her brother, who had killed her huſband Sichæus) had lately built Carthage. She entertained Æneas and his fleet with great civility, fell paſſionately in love with him, and in the end denied him not the laſt favours. But Mercury admoniſhing Æneas to go in ſearch of Italy, (a kingdom promiſed him by the Gods) he readily prepared to follow him. Dido ſoon perceived it, and having in vain tried all other means to engage him to ſtay, at laſt in deſpair writes to him as follows.

SO, on Mæander's banks, when death is nigh,
The mournful ſwan ſings her own elegy.
Not that I hope (for, oh, that hope were vain!)
By words your loſt affection to regain:
But having loſt whate'er was worth my care,
Why ſhould I fear to loſe a dying pray'r?
'Tis then reſolv'd poor Dido muſt be left,
Of life, of honour, and of love bereft!
While you, with looſen'd ſails, and vows, prepare
To ſeek a land that flies the ſearcher's care.
Nor can my riſing tow'rs your flight reſtrain,
Nor my new empire, offer'd you in vain.
Built walls you ſhun, unbuilt you ſeek; that land
Is yet to conquer; but you this command.

Suppoſe

Suppoſe you landed where your wiſh deſign'd,
Think what reception foreigners would find.
What people is ſo void of common ſenſe,
To vote ſucceſſion from a native prince?
Yet there new ſcepters and new loves you ſeek;
New vows to plight, and plighted vows to break.
When will your tow'rs the height of Carthage know?
Or when your eyes diſcern ſuch crowds below?
If ſuch a town and ſubjects you could ſee,
Still would you want a wife who lov'd like me.
For, oh, I burn, like fires with incenſe bright:
Not holy tapers flame with purer light:
Æneas is my thoughts perpetual theme;
Their daily longing, and their nightly dream.
Yet he's ungrateful and obdurate ſtill:
Fool that I am to place my heart ſo ill!
Myſelf I cannot to myſelf reſtore;
Still I complain, and ſtill I love him more.
Have pity, Cupid, on my bleeding heart,
And pierce thy brother's with an equal dart.
I rave: nor canſt thou Venus' offspring be,
Love's mother could not bear a ſon like thee.
From harden'd oak, or from a rock's cold womb,
At leaſt thou art from ſome fierce tigreſs come;
Or on rough ſeas, from their foundation torn,
Got by the winds, and in a tempeſt born:
Like that which now thy trembling ſailors fear;
Like that whoſe rage ſhould ſtill detain thee here.
Behold how high the foamy billows ride!
The winds and waves are on the juſter ſide.
To winter weather and a ſtormy ſea
I'll owe, what rather I would owe to thee.
Death thou deſerv'ſt from heav'n's avenging laws;
But I'm unwilling to become the cauſe.
To ſhun my love, if thou wilt ſeek thy fate,
'Tis a dear purchaſe, and a coſtly hate.

Stay but a little, 'till the tempeſt ceaſe,
And the loud winds are lull'd into a peace.
May all thy rage, like theirs, unconſtant prove!
And ſo it will, if there be pow'r in love.
Know'ſt thou not yet what dangers ſhips ſuſtain?
So often wreck'd, how dar'ſt thou tempt the main?
Which were it ſmooth, were ev'ry wave aſleep,
Ten thouſand forms of death are in the deep.
In that abyſs the Gods their vengeance ſtore,
For broken vows of thoſe who falſely ſwore.
There winged ſtorms on ſea-born Venus wait,
To vindicate the juſtice of her ſtate.
Thus I to thee the means of ſafety ſhow;
And, loſt myſelf, would ſtill preſerve my foe.
Falſe as thou art, I not thy death deſign:
O rather live, to be the cauſe of mine!
Should ſome avenging ſtorm thy veſſel tear,
(But heav'n forbid my words ſhould omen bear)
Then in thy face thy perjur'd vows would fly;
And my wrong'd ghoſt be preſent to thy eye.
With threat'ning looks think thou behold'ſt me ſtare,
Gaſping my mouth, and clotted all my hair.
Then, ſhould fork'd lightning and red thunder fall,
What couldſt thou ſay, but, I deſerv'd 'em all?
Leſt this ſhould happen, make not haſte away;
To ſhun the danger will be worth thy ſtay.
Have pity on thy ſon, if not on me:
My death alone is guilt enough for thee.
What has his youth, what have thy Gods deſerv'd,
To ſink in ſeas, who were from fires preſerv'd?
But neither Gods nor parent didſt thou bear;
Smooth ſtories all to pleaſe a woman's ear,
Falſe as the tale of thy romantick life.
Nor yet am I thy firſt-deluded wife:
Left to purſuing foes Creüſa ſtay'd,
By thee, baſe man, forſaken and betray'd.

This,

This, when thou told'ſt me, ſtruck my tender heart,
That ſuch requital follow'd ſuch deſert.
Nor doubt I but the Gods, for crimes like theſe,
Sev'n winters kept thee wand'ring on the ſeas.
Thy ſtarv'd companions, caſt aſhore, I fed,
Thyſelf admitted to my crown and bed.
To harbour ſtrangers, ſuccour the diſtreſt,
Was kind enough; but, oh, too kind the reſt!
Curſt be the cave which firſt my ruin brought,
Where, from the ſtorm, we common ſhelter ſought!
A dreadful howling echo'd round the place:
The mountain nymphs, thought I, my nuptials grace.
I thought ſo then, but now too late I know
The furies yell'd my fun'rals from below.
O chaſtity and violated fame,
Exact your dues to my dead huſband's name!
By death redeem my reputation loſt,
And to his arms reſtore my guilty ghoſt.
Cloſe by my palace, in a gloomy grove,
Is rais'd a chapel to my murder'd love;
There, wreath'd with boughs and wool, his ſtatue ſtands,
The pious monument of artful hands.
Laſt night, methought, he call'd me from the dome,
And thrice, with hollow voice, cry'd, Dido, come.
She comes; thy wife thy lawful ſummons hears;
But comes more ſlowly, clogg'd with conſcious fears.
Forgive the wrong I offer'd to thy bed;
Strong were his charms, who my weak faith miſled.
His Goddeſs mother, and his aged ſire
Borne on his back, did to my fall conſpire.
Oh! ſuch he was, and is, that, were he true,
Without a bluſh I might his love purſue.
But cruel ſtars my birth-day did attend;
And as my fortune open'd, it muſt end.
My plighted lord was at the altar ſlain,
Whoſe wealth was made my bloody brother's gain.

Friendleſs, and follow'd by the murd'rer's hate,
To foreign countries I remov'd my fate;
And here, a ſuppliant, from the natives hands
I bought the ground on which my city ſtands,
With all the coaſt that ſtretches to the ſea;
E'en to the friendly port that ſhelter'd thee:
Then rais'd theſe walls, which mount into the air,
At once my neighbours wonder, and their fear.
For now they arm; and round me leagues are made,
My ſcarce eſtabliſh'd empire to invade.
To man my new-built walls I muſt prepare,
An helpleſs woman, and unſkill'd in war.
Yet thouſand rivals to my love pretend;
And for my perſon would my crown defend;
Whoſe jarring votes in one complaint agree,
That each unjuſtly is diſdain'd for thee.
To proud Hyarbas give me up a prey;
(For that muſt follow, if thou goeſt away.)
Or to my huſband's murd'rer leave my life,
That to the huſband he may add the wife.
Go then, ſince no complaints can move thy mind:
Go, perjur'd man, but leave thy Gods behind.
Touch not thoſe Gods, by whom thou art forſworn,
Who will in impious hands no more be borne:
Thy ſacrilegious worſhip they diſdain,
And rather would the Grecian fires ſuſtain.
Perhaps my greateſt ſhame is ſtill to come,
And part of thee lies hid within my womb.
The babe unborn muſt periſh by thy hate,
And periſh guiltleſs in his mother's fate.
Some God, thou ſay'ſt, thy voyage does command;
Would the ſame God had barr'd thee from my land!
The ſame, I doubt not, thy departure ſteers,
Who kept thee out at ſea ſo many years;
While thy long labours were a price ſo great,
As thou to purchaſe Troy would'ſt not repeat.

But

But Tyber now thou ſeek'ſt, to be at beſt,
When there arriv'd, a poor precarious gueſt.
Yet it deludes thy ſearch: perhaps it will
To thy old age lie undiſcover'd ſtill.
A ready crown and wealth in dow'r I bring,
And, without conqu'ring, here thou art a king.
Here thou to Carthage may'ſt transfer thy Troy:
Here young Aſcanius may his arms employ;
And, while we live ſecure in ſoft repoſe,
Bring many laurels home from conquer'd foes.
By Cupid's arrows, I adjure thee ſtay;
By all the Gods, companions of thy way.
So may thy Trojans, who are yet alive,
Live ſtill, and with no future fortune ſtrive;
So may thy youthful ſon old age attain,
And thy dead father's bones in peace remain:
As thou haſt pity on unhappy me,
Who knew no crime, but too much love of thee.
I am not born from fierce Achilles' line,
Nor did my parents againſt Troy combine.
To be thy wife if I unworthy prove,
By ſome inferior name admit my love.
To be ſecur'd of ſtill poſſeſſing thee,
What would I do, and what would I not be!
Our Libyan coaſts their certain ſeaſons know,
When free from tempeſts paſſengers may go:
But now with northern blaſts the billows roar,
And drive the floating ſea-weed to the ſhore.
Leave to my care the time to ſail away;
When ſafe, I will not ſuffer thee to ſtay.
Thy weary men would be with eaſe content;
Their ſails are tatter'd, and their maſts are ſpent.
If by no merit I thy mind can move,
What thou deny'ſt my merit, give my love.
Stay, 'till I learn my loſs to undergo;
And give me time to ſtruggle with my woe.

If not, know this, I will not ſuffer long;
My life's too loathſome, and my love too ſtrong,
Death holds my pen and dictates what I ſay,
While croſs my lap the Trojan ſword I lay.
My tears flow down; the ſharp edge cuts their flood,
And drinks my ſorrows that muſt drink my blood.
How well thy gift does with my fate agree!
My fun'ral pomp is cheaply made by thee.
To no new wounds my boſom I diſplay:
The ſword but enters where love made the way.
But thou, dear ſiſter, and yet dearer friend,
Shalt my cold aſhes to their urn attend.
Sichæus' wife let not the marble boaſt,
I loſt that title, when my fame I loſt.
This ſhort inſcription only let it bear:
" Unhappy Dido lies in quiet here.
" The cauſe of death, and ſword by which ſhe dy'd,
" Æneas gave: the reſt her arm ſupply'd."

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

OVID's ART of LOVE.

THE

FIRST BOOK

OF

OVID's ART of LOVE.

IN Cupid's ſchool whoe'er would take degree,
Muſt learn his rudiments, by reading me.
Seamen with ſailing arts their veſſels move;
Art guides the chariot; art inſtructs to love.
Of ſhips and chariots others know the rule;
But I am maſter in Love's mighty ſchool.
Cupid indeed is obſtinate and wild,
A ſtubborn God; but yet the God's a child:
Eaſy to govern in his tender age,
Like fierce Achilles in his pupillage:
That hero, born for conqueſt, trembling ſtood
Before the Centaur, and receiv'd the rod.
As Chiron mollify'd his cruel mind
With art, and taught his warlike hands to wind
The ſilver ſtrings of his melodious lyre:
So Love's fair Goddeſs does my ſoul inſpire,
To teach her ſofter arts; to ſooth the mind,
And ſmooth the rugged breaſts of human kind.
Yet Cupid and Achilles, each with ſcorn
And rage were fill'd; and both were goddeſs-born,
The bull, reclaim'd and yok'd, the burden draws:
The horſe receives the bit within his jaws;
And ſtubborn Love ſhall bend beneath my ſway,
Tho' ſtruggling oft he ſtrives to diſobey.

He

He ſhakes his torch, he wounds me with his darts;
But vain his force, and vainer are his arts.
The more he burns my ſoul, or wounds my ſight,
The more he teaches to revenge the ſpite.
I boaſt no aid the Delphian God affords,
Nor auſpice from the flight of chattering birds;
Nor Clio, nor her ſiſters have I ſeen;
As Heſiod ſaw them on the ſhady green:
Experience makes my work; a truth ſo try'd
You may believe; and Venus be my guide.
Far hence, ye veſtals, be, who bind your hair;
And wives, who gowns below your ancles wear.
I ſing the brothels looſe and unconfin'd,
Th' unpuniſhable pleaſures of the kind;
Which all alike, for love, or money, find.
You, who in Cupid's rolls inſcribe your name,
Firſt ſeek an object worthy of your flame;
Then ſtrive, with art, your lady's mind to gain:
And, laſt, provide your love may long remain.
On theſe three precepts all my work ſhall move:
Theſe are the rules and principles of love.
Before your youth with marriage is oppreſt,
Make choice of one who ſuits your humour beſt:
And ſuch a damſel drops not from the ſky;
She muſt be ſought for with a curious eye.
The wary angler, in the winding brook,
Knows what the fiſh, and where to bait his hook.
The fowler and the huntſman know by name
The certain haunts and harbour of their game.
So muſt the lover beat the likelieſt grounds;
Th' aſſembly where his quarry moſt abounds.
Nor ſhall my novice wander far aſtray;
Theſe rules ſhall put him in the ready way.
Thou ſhalt not ſail around the continent,
As far as Perſeus, or as Paris went:
For Rome alone affords thee ſuch a ſtore,
As all the world can hardly ſhew thee more.

The face of heav'n with fewer ſtars is crown'd,
Than beauties in the Roman ſphere are found.
Whether thy love is bent on blooming youth,
On dawning ſweetneſs in unartful truth;
Or courts the juicy joys of riper growth;
Here may'ſt thou find thy full deſires in both.
Or if autumnal beauties pleaſe thy ſight
(An age that knows to give, and take delight;)
Millions of matrons of the graver ſort,
In common prudence, will not balk the ſport.
In ſummer heats thou need'ſt but only go
To Pompey's cool and ſhady portico;
Or Concord's fane; or that proud edifice,
Whoſe turrets near the baudy ſuburb riſe:
Or to that other portico, where ſtands
The cruel father urging his commands,
And fifty daughters wait the time of reſt,
To plunge their poniards in the bridegrooms breaſt:
Or Venus' temple; where, on annual nights,
They mourn Adonis with Aſſyrian rites.
Nor ſhun the Jewiſh walk, where the foul drove,
On ſabbaths, reſt from ev'ry thing but love:
Nor Iſis' temple; for that ſacred whore
Makes others, what to Jove ſhe was before.
And if the hall itſelf be not bely'd,
E'en there the cauſe of love is often try'd;
Near it at leaſt, or in the palace-yard,
From whence the noiſy combatants are heard.
The crafty counſellors, in formal gown,
There gain another's cauſe, but loſe their own.
There eloquence is nonpluſt in the ſuit:
And lawyers, who had words at will, are mute.
Venus, from her adjoining temple, ſmiles,
To ſee them caught in their litigious wiles.
Grave ſenators lead home the youthful dame,
Returning clients, when they patrons came.

But, above all, the play-houſe is the place;
There's choice of quarry in that narrow chace.
There take thy ſtand, and ſharply looking out,
Soon may'ſt thou find a miſtreſs in the rout,
For length of time, or for a ſingle bout.
The theatres are berries for the fair:
Like ants on mole-hills thither they repair;
Like bees to hives, ſo num'rouſly they throng,
It may be ſaid, they to that place belong.
Thither they ſwarm, who have the public voice:
There chooſe, if plenty not diſtracts thy choice.
To ſee, and to be ſeen, in heaps they run;
Some to undo, and ſome to be undone.
From Romulus the riſe of plays began,
To his new ſubjects a commodious man;
Who, his unmarried ſoldiers to ſupply,
Took care the commonwealth ſhould multiply:
Providing Sabine women for his braves,
Like a true king, to get a race of ſlaves.
His play-houſe not of Parian marble made,
Nor was it ſpread with purple ſails for ſhade.
The ſtage with ruſhes, or with leaves they ſtrew'd:
No ſcenes in proſpect, no machining God.
On rows of homely turf they ſat to ſee,
Crown'd with the wreaths of ev'ry common tree.
There, while they ſat in ruſtic majeſty,
Each lover had his miſtreſs in his eye;
And whom he ſaw moſt ſuiting to his mind,
For joys of matrimonial rape deſign'd.
Scarce could they wait the plaudit in their haſte;
But, ere the dances and the ſong were paſt,
The monarch gave the ſignal from his throne;
And, riſing, bade his merry men fall on.
The martial crew, like ſoldiers ready preſt,
Juſt at the word (the word too was, The Beſt)
With joyful cries each other animate;
Some chooſe, and ſome at hazard ſeize their mate.

As doves from eagles, or from wolves the lambs,
So from their lawleſs lovers fly the dames.
Their fear was one, but not one face of fear;
Some rend the lovely treſſes of their hair;
Some ſhriek, and ſome are ſtruck with dumb deſpair.
Her abſent mother one invokes in vain;
One ſtands amaz'd, not daring to complain;
The nimbler truſt their feet, the ſlow remain.
But nought availing, all are captives led,
Trembling and bluſhing, to the genial bed.
She who too long reſiſted, or deny'd,
The luſty lover made by force a bride;
And, with ſuperior ſtrength, compell'd her to his ſide.
Then ſooth'd her thus:--My ſoul's far better part,
Ceaſe weeping, nor afflict thy tender heart:
For what thy father to thy mother was,
That faith to thee, that ſolemn vow I paſs.
Thus Romulus became ſo popular;
This was the way to thrive in peace and war;
To pay his army, and freſh whores to bring:
Who would not fight for ſuch a gracious king?
Thus love in theatres did firſt improve;
And theatres are ſtill the ſcenes of love:
Nor ſhun the chariot's, and the courſer's race;
The Circus is no inconvenient place.
No need is there of talking on the hand;
Nor nods, nor ſigns, which lovers underſtand.
But boldly next the fair your ſeat provide;
Cloſe as you can to hers, and ſide by ſide.
Pleas'd or unpleas'd, no matter; crouding ſit:
For ſo the laws of publick ſhows permit.
Then find occaſion to begin diſcourſe;
Inquire, whoſe chariot this, and whoſe that horſe?
To whatſoever ſide ſhe is inclin'd,
Suit all your inclinations to her mind;
Like what ſhe likes; from thence your court begin;
And whom ſhe favours, wiſh that he may win.

But when the ſtatues of the Deities,
In chariots roll'd, appear before the prize;
When Venus comes, with deep devotion riſe.
If duſt be on her lap, or grains of ſand,
Bruſh both away with your officious hand.
If none be there, yet bruſh that nothing thence;
And ſtill to touch her lap make ſome pretence.
Touch any thing of hers; and if her train
Sweep on the ground, let it not ſweep in vain;
But gently take it up, and wipe it clean;
And while you wipe it, with obſerving eyes,
Who knows but you may ſee her naked thighs!
Obſerve, who ſits behind her; and beware,
Leſt his incroaching knee ſhould preſs the fair.
Light ſervice takes light minds: for ſome can tell
Of favours won, by laying cuſhions well:
By fanning faces ſome their fortune meet;
And ſome by laying footſtools for their feet.
Theſe overtures of love the Circus gives;
Nor at the ſword-play leſs the lover thrives:
For there the ſon of Venus fights his prize;
And deepeſt wounds are oft receiv'd from eyes.
One, while the crowd their acclamations make,
Or while he bets, and puts his ring to ſtake,
Is ſtruck from far, and feels the flying dart;
And of the ſpectacle is made a part.

Cæſar would repreſent a naval fight,
For his own honour, and for Rome's delight.
From either ſea the youths and maidens come;
And all the world was then contain'd in Rome.
In this vaſt concourſe, in this choice of game,
What Roman heart but felt a foreign flame?
Once more our prince prepares to make us glad;
And the remaining Eaſt to Rome will add.
Rejoice, ye Roman ſoldiers, in your urn;
Your enſigns from the Parthians ſhall return;
And the ſlain Craſſi ſhall no longer mourn.

A youth is ſent thoſe trophies to demand;
And bears his father's thunder in his hand:
Doubt not th' imperial boy in wars unſeen;
In childhood all of Cæſar's race are men.
Celeſtial ſeeds ſhoot out before their day,
Prevent their years, and brook no dull delay.
Thus infant Hercules the ſnakes did preſs,
And in his cradle did his ſire confeſs.
Bacchus, a boy, yet like a hero fought,
And early ſpoils from conquer'd India brought.
Thus you your father's troops ſhall lead to fight,
And thus ſhall vanquiſh in your father's right.
Theſe rudiments you to your lineage owe;
Born to increaſe your titles, as you grow.
Brethren you had, revenge your brethren ſlain;
You have a father, and his rights maintain.
Arm'd by your country's parent, and your own,
Redeem your country, and reſtore his throne.
Your enemies aſſert an impious cauſe;
You fight both for divine and human laws.
Already in their cauſe they are o'ercome:
Subject them too, by force of arms, to Rome.
Great father Mars with greater Cæſar join,
To give a proſp'rous omen to your line:
One of you is, and one ſhall be divine.
I propheſy you ſhall, you ſhall o'ercome:
My verſe ſhall bring you back in triumph home.
Speak in my verſe, exhort to loud alarms:
O were my numbers equal to your arms!
Then would I ſing the Parthians overthrow;
Their ſhot averſe ſent from a flying bow:
The Parthians, who already flying fight,
Already give an omen of their flight.
O when will come the day, by heav'n deſign'd,
When thou, the beſt and faireſt of mankind,

Drawn by white horſes ſhalt in triumph ride,
With conquer'd ſlaves attending on thy ſide;
Slaves, that no longer can be ſafe in flight;
O glorious object, O ſurpriſing ſight,
O day of publick joy; too good to end in night!
On ſuch a day, if thou, and, next to thee,
Some beauty ſits, the ſpectacle to ſee:
If ſhe inquire the names of conquer'd kings,
Of mountains, rivers, and their hidden ſprings,
Anſwer to all thou know'ſt; and, if need be,
Of things unknown ſeem to ſpeak knowingly:
This is Euphrates, crown'd with reeds; and there
Flows the ſwift Tigris with his ſea-green hair.
Invent new names of things unknown before;
Call this Armenia, that the Caſpian ſhore;
Call this a Mede, and that a Parthian youth;
Talk probably; no matter for the truth.
In feaſts, as at our ſhows, new means abound;
More pleaſure there, than that of wine, is found.
The Paphian Goddeſs there her ambuſh lays;
And Love betwixt the horns of Bacchus plays:
Deſires increaſe at ev'ry ſwelling draught;
Briſk vapours add new vigour to the thought.
There Cupid's purple wings no flight afford;
But, wet with wine, he flutters on the board.
He ſhakes his pinions, but he cannot move;
Fix'd he remains, and turns a maudlin Love.
Wine warms the blood, and makes the ſpirits flow;
Care flies, and wrinkles from the forehead go:
Exalts the poor, invigorates the weak;
Gives mirth and laughter, and a roſy cheek.
Bold truths it ſpeaks; and ſpoken, dares maintain;
And brings our old ſimplicity again.
Love ſparkles in the cup, and fills it higher:
Wine feeds the flames, and fuel adds to fire.

But choose no mistress in thy drunken fit;
Wine gilds too much their beauties and their wit.
Nor trust thy judgment when the tapers dance;
But sober, and by day, thy suit advance.
By day-light Paris judg'd the beauteous three;
And for the fairest did the prize decree.
Night is a cheat, and all deformities
Are hid, or lessen'd in her dark disguise.
The sun's fair light each error will confess,
In face, in shape, in jewels, and in dress.
Why name I ev'ry place where youths abound?
'Tis loss of time, and a too fruitful ground.
The Baian baths, where ships at anchor ride,
And wholsome streams from sulphur fountains glide;
Where wounded youths are by experience taught,
The waters are less healthful than they thought.
Or Dian's fane, which near the suburb lies,
Where priests, for their promotion, fight a prize.
That maiden Goddess is Love's mortal foe,
And much from her his subjects undergo.
Thus far the sportful Muse, with myrtle bound,
Has sung where lovely lasses may be found.
Now let me sing, how she who wounds your mind,
With art, may be to cure your wounds inclin'd.
Young nobles, to my laws attention lend;
And all you vulgar of my school attend.
First then believe, all women may be won;
Attempt with confidence, the work is done.
The grashopper shall first forbear to sing
In summer season, or the birds in spring;
Than women can resist your flatt'ring skill:
E'en she will yield, who swears she never will.
To secret pleasure both the sexes move;
But women most, who most dissemble love.
'Twere best for us, if they would first declare,
Avow their passion, and submit to pray'r.

The cow, by lowing, tells the bull her flame:
The neighing mare invites her ſtallion to the game;
Man is more temp'rate in his luſt than they,
And, more than women, can his paſſion ſway.
Biblis, we know, did firſt her love declare,
And had recourſe to death in her deſpair.
Her brother ſhe, her father Myrrha ſought,
And lov'd, but lov'd not as a daughter ought.
Now from a tree ſhe ſtills her od'rous tears,
Which yet the name of her who ſhed 'em bears.
In Ida's ſhady vale a bull appear'd,
White as the ſnow, the faireſt of the herd;
A beauty-ſpot of black there only roſe,
Betwixt his equal horns and ample brows:
The love and wiſh of all the Cretan cows.
The queen beheld him as his head he rear'd;
And envy'd ev'ry leap he gave the herd.
A ſecret fire ſhe nouriſh'd in her breaſt,
And hated ev'ry heifer he careſs'd.
A ſtory known, and known for true, I tell;
Nor Crete, though lying, can the truth conceal.
She cut him graſs; (ſo much can Love command)
She ſtrok'd, ſhe fed him with her royal hand:
Was pleas'd in paſtures with the herd to roam;
And Minos by the bull was overcome.
Ceaſe, queen, with gems t'adorn thy beauteous brows;
The monarch of thy heart no jewel knows.
Nor in thy glaſs compoſe thy looks and eyes:
Secure from all thy charms thy lover lies:
Yet truſt thy mirror, when it tells thee true;
Thou art no heifer to allure his view.
Soon wouldſt thou quit thy royal diadem
To thy fair rivals, to be horn'd like them.
If Minos pleaſe, no lover ſeek to find;
If not, at leaſt ſeek one of human kind.

The wretched queen the Cretan court forſakes;
In woods and wilds her habitation makes:
She curſes ev'ry beauteous cow ſhe ſees;
Ah, why doſt thou my lord and maſter pleaſe!
And think'ſt, ungrateful creature as thou art,
With friſking aukwardly, to gain his heart!
She ſaid, and ſtraight commands, with frowning look,
To put her, undeſerving, to the yoke;
Or feigns ſome holy rites of ſacrifice,
And ſees her rival's death with joyful eyes:
Then, when the bloody prieſt has done his part,
Pleas'd, in her hand ſhe holds the beating heart;
Nor from a ſcornful taunt can ſcarce refrain;
Go, fool, and ſtrive to pleaſe my love again.
Now ſhe would be Europa, Io now;
(One bore a bull, and one was made a cow.)
Yet ſhe at laſt her brutal bliſs obtain'd,
And in a wooden cow the bull ſuſtain'd;
Fill'd with his ſeed, accompliſh'd her deſire;
Till by his form the ſon betray'd the fire.
If Atreus' wife to inceſt had not run,
(But, ah, how hard it is to love but one!)
His courſes Phœbus had not driv'n away,
To ſhun that ſight, and interrupt the day.
Thy daughter, Niſus, pull'd thy purple hair,
And barking ſea-dogs yet her bowels tear.
At ſea and land Atrides ſav'd his life,
Yet fell a prey to his adult'rous wife.
Who knows not what revenge Medea fought,
When the ſlain offspring bore the father's fault?
Thus Phœnix did a woman's love bewail;
And thus Hippolytus by Phædra fell.
Theſe crimes revengeful matrons did commit:
Hotter their luſt, and ſharper is their wit.
Doubt not from them an eaſy victory:
Scarce of a thouſand dames will one deny.

All women are content that men ſhould woo:
She who complains, and ſhe who will not do.
Reſt then ſecure, whate'er thy luck may prove,
Not to be hated for declaring love.
And yet how canſt thou miſs, ſince womankind
Is frail and vain, and ſtill to change inclin'd?
Old huſbands and ſtale galants they deſpiſe;
And more another's, than their own, they prize.
A larger crop adorns our neighbour's field;
More milk his kine from ſwelling udders yield.
  Firſt gain the maid: by her thou ſhalt be ſure
A free acceſs and eaſy to procure:
Who knows what to her office does belong,
Is in the ſecret, and can hold her tongue.
Bribe her with gifts, with promiſes, and pray'rs;
For her good word goes far in love-affairs.
The time and fit occaſion leave to her,
When ſhe moſt aptly can thy ſuit prefer.
The time for maids to fire their lady's blood,
Is, when they find her in a merry mood;
When all things at her wiſh and pleaſure move:
Her heart is open then, and free to love.
Then mirth and wantonneſs to luſt betray,
And ſmooth the paſſage to the lover's way.
Troy ſtood the ſiege, when fill'd with anxious care;
One merry fit concluded all the war.
  If ſome fair rival vex her jealous mind,
Offer thy ſervice to revenge in kind,
Inſtruct the damſel, while ſhe combs her hair,
To raiſe the choler of that injur'd fair;
And, ſighing, make her miſtreſs underſtand,
She has the means of vengeance in her hand:
Then, naming thee, thy humble ſuit prefer;
And ſwear thou languiſheſt and dy'ſt for her.
Then let her loſe no time, but puſh at all;
For women ſoon are rais'd, and ſoon they fall.

Give

Give their firſt fury leiſure to relent,
They melt like ice, and ſuddenly repent.
T' enjoy the maid, will that thy ſuit advance?
'Tis a hard queſtion, and a doubtful chance.
One maid, corrupted, bauds the better for't;
Another for herſelf would keep the ſport.
Thy bus'neſs may be further'd or delay'd:
But by my counſel, let alone the maid:
E'en tho' ſhe ſhould conſent to do the feat;
The profit's little, and the danger great.
I will not lead thee through a rugged road;
But where the way lies open, ſafe, and broad.
Yet if thou find'ſt her very much thy friend,
And her good face her diligence commend:
Let the fair miſtreſs have thy firſt embrace,
And let the maid come after in her place.
But this I will adviſe, and mark my words;
For 'tis the beſt advice my ſkill affords:
If needs thou with the damſel wilt begin,
Before th' attempt is made, make ſure to win:
For then the ſecret better will be kept;
And ſhe can tell no tales when once ſhe's dipt.
'Tis for the fowler's int'reſt to beware,
The bird intangled ſhould not 'ſcape the ſnare.
The fiſh, once prick'd, avoids the bearded hook,
And ſpoils the ſport of all the neighb'ring brook,
But if the wench be thine, ſhe makes thy way,
And, for thy ſake, her miſtreſs will betray;
Tell all ſhe knows, and all ſhe hears her ſay.
Keep well the counſel of thy faithful ſpy:
So ſhalt thou learn whene'er ſhe treads awry.
All things the ſtations of their ſeaſons keep;
And certain times there are to ſow and reap.
Ploughmen and ſailors for the ſeaſon ſtay,
One to plough land, and one to plough the ſea:
So ſhould the lover wait the lucky day.

Then ſtop thy ſuit, it hurts not thy deſign:
But think, another hour ſhe may be thine.
And when ſhe celebrates her birth at home,
Or when ſhe views the public ſhows of Rome,
Know, all thy viſits then are troubleſome.
Defer thy work, and put not then to ſea,
For that's a boding and a ſtormy day.
Elſe take thy time, and, when thou canſt, begin:
To break a Jewiſh ſabbath, think no ſin:
Nor e'en on ſuperſtitious days abſtain;
Not when the Romans were at Allia ſlain.
Ill omens in her frowns are underſtood;
When ſhe's in humour, ev'ry day is good.
But than her birth-day ſeldom comes a worſe;
When bribes and preſents muſt be ſent of courſe;
And that's a bloody day, that coſts thy purſe.
Be ſtanch; yet parſimony will be vain:
The craving ſex will ſtill the lover drain.
No ſkill can ſhift them off, nor art remove;
They will be begging, when they know we love.
The merchant comes upon th' appointed day,
Who ſhall before thy face his wares diſplay.
To chooſe for her ſhe craves thy kind advice;
Then begs again, to bargain for the price:
But when ſhe has her purchaſe in her eye,
She hugs thee cloſe, and kiſſes thee to buy.
'Tis what I want, and 'tis a pen'orth too:
In many years I will not trouble you.
If you complain you have no ready coin;
No matter, 'tis but writing of a line,
A little bill, not to be paid at ſight;
Now curſe the time when thou wert taught to write.
She keeps her birth-day; you muſt ſend the chear;
And ſhe'll be born a hundred times a year.
With daily lies ſhe dribs thee into coſt;
That ear-ring dropt a ſtone, that ring is loſt.

They

They often borrow what they never pay;
Whate'er you lend her, think it thrown away.
Had I ten mouths and tongues to tell each art,
All would be wearied ere I told a part.
By letters, not by words thy love begin;
And ford the dang'rous paſſage with thy pen.
If to her heart thou aim'ſt to find the way,
Extremely flatter, and extremely pray.
Priam by pray'rs did Hector's body gain;
Nor is an angry God invok'd in vain.
With promis'd gifts her eaſy mind bewitch;
For e'en the poor in promiſe may be rich.
Vain hopes awhile her appetite will ſtay;
'Tis a deceitful, but commodious way.
Who gives is mad; but make her ſtill believe
'Twill come, and that's the cheapeſt way to give.
E'en barren lands fair promiſes afford;
But the lean harveſt cheats the ſtarving lord.
Buy not thy firſt enjoyment, leſt it prove
Of bad example to thy future love:
But get it gratis; and ſhe'll give thee more,
For fear of loſing what ſhe gave before.
The loſing gameſter ſhakes the box in vain,
And bleeds, and loſes on, in hopes to gain.
Write then, and in thy letter, as I ſaid,
Let her with mighty promiſes be fed.
Cydippe by a letter was betray'd,
Writ on an apple to th' unwary maid.
She read herſelf into a marriage-vow;
(And ev'ry cheat in love the Gods allow.)
Learn eloquence, ye noble youth of Rome;
It will not only at the bar o'ercome:
Sweet words the people and the ſenate move;
But the chief end of eloquence is love.
But in thy letter hide thy moving arts;
Affect not to be thought a man of parts.

None

None but vain fools to ſimple women preach:
A learned letter oft has made a breach.
In a familiar ſtile your thoughts convey,
And write ſuch things as preſent you would ſay;
Such words as from the heart may ſeem to move:
'Tis wit enough, to make her think you love.
If ſeal'd ſhe ſends it back, and will not read,
Yet hope, in time, the buſineſs may ſucceed.
In time the ſteer will to the yoke ſubmit;
In time the reſtiff horſe will bear the bit.
E'en the hard plough-ſhare uſe will wear away:
And ſtubborn ſteel in length of time decay.
Water is ſoft, and marble hard; and yet
We ſee ſoft water through hard marble eat.
Though late, yet Troy at length in flames expir'd:
And ten years more Penelope had tir'd.
Perhaps thy lines unanſwer'd ſhe retain'd;
No matter; there's a point already gain'd:
For ſhe, who reads, in time will anſwer too;
Things muſt be left by juſt degrees to grow.
Perhaps ſhe writes, but anſwers with diſdain,
And ſharply bids you not to write again:
What ſhe requires, ſhe fears you ſhould accord;
The jilt would not be taken at her word.
Mean time, if ſhe be carried in her chair,
Approach, but do not ſeem to know ſhe's there.
Speak ſoftly to delude the ſtanders-by;
Or, if aloud, then ſpeak ambiguouſly.
If ſaunt'ring in the portico ſhe walk,
Move ſlowly too; for that's a time for talk:
And ſometimes follow, ſometimes be her guide:
But, when the crowd permits, go ſide by ſide.
Nor in the play-houſe let her ſit alone:
For ſhe's the play-houſe, and the play in one.
There thou may'ſt ogle, or by ſigns advance
Thy ſuit, and ſeem to touch her hand by chance.

Admire

Admire the dancer who her liking gains,
And pity in the play the lover's pains;
For her ſweet ſake the loſs of time deſpiſe;
Sit while ſhe ſits, and when ſhe riſes riſe.
But dreſs not like a fop, nor curl your hair,
Nor with a pumice make your body bare.
Leave thoſe effeminate and uſeleſs toys
To eunuchs, who can give no ſolid joys.
Neglect becomes a man: this Theſeus found:
Uncurl'd, uncomb'd, the nymph his wiſhes crown'd.
The rough Hippolytus was Phædra's care;
And Venus thought the rude Adonis fair.
Be not too finical; but yet be clean:
And wear well-faſhion'd clothes, like other men.
Let not your teeth be yellow, or be foul;
Nor in wide ſhoes your feet too looſly roll.
Of a black muzzle, and long beard, beware;
And let a ſkilful barber cut your hair.
Your nails be pick'd from filth, and even par'd;
Nor let your naſty noſtrils bud with beard.
Cure your unſav'ry breath, gargle your throat;
And free your armpits from the ram and goat.
Dreſs not, in ſhort, too little or too much;
And be not wholly French, nor wholly Dutch.
Now Bacchus calls me to his jolly rites:
Who would not follow, when a God invites?
He helps the poet, and his pen inſpires,
Kind and indulgent to his former fires.
Fair Ariadne wander'd on the ſhore,
Forſaken now; and Theſeus lov'd no more:
Looſe was her gown, diſhevel'd was her hair;
Her boſom naked, and her feet were bare:
Exclaiming, on the water's brink ſhe ſtood;
Her briny tears augment the briny flood.
She ſhriek'd, and wept, and both became her face:
No poſture could that heav'nly form diſgrace,

She beat her breaſt: The traitor's gone, ſaid ſhe;
What ſhall become of poor forſaken me?
What ſhall become——ſhe had not time for more,
The ſounding cymbals rattled on the ſhore.
She ſwoons for fear, ſhe falls upon the ground;
No vital heat was in her body found.
The Mimallonian dames about her ſtood;
And ſcudding ſatyrs ran before their God.
Silenus on his aſs did next appear,
And held upon the mane; (the God was clear)
The drunken fire purſues, the dames retire:
Sometimes the drunken dames purſue the drunken fire.
At laſt he topples over on the plain;
The ſatyrs laugh, and bid him riſe again.
And now the God of Wine came driving on,
High on his chariot by ſwift tigers drawn.
Her colour, voice, and ſenſe forſook the fair;
Thrice did her trembling feet for flight prepare,
And thrice affrighted did her flight forbear.
She ſhook, like leaves of corn when tempeſts blow,
Or ſlender reeds that in the marſhes grow.
To whom the God: Compoſe thy fearful mind:
In me a truer huſband thou ſhalt find.
With heav'n I will endow thee, and thy ſtar
Shall with propitious light be ſeen afar,
And guide on ſeas the doubtful mariner.
He ſaid, and from his chariot leaping light,
Leſt the grim tigers ſhould the nymph affright,
His brawny arms around her waiſt he threw;
(For Gods, whate'er they will, with eaſe can do:)
And ſwiftly bore her thence: th' attending throng
Shout at the ſight, and ſing the nuptial ſong.
Now in full bowls her ſorrow ſhe may ſteep:
The bridegroom's liquor lays the bride aſleep.
But thou, when flowing cups in triumph ride,
And the lov'd nymph is ſeated by thy ſide;

Invoke

Invoke the God, and all the mighty Pow'rs,
That wine may not defraud thy genial hours.
Then in ambiguous words thy ſuit prefer,
Which ſhe may know were all addreſt to her.
In liquid purple letters write her name,
Which ſhe may read, and reading find the flame.
Then may your eyes confeſs your mutual fires;
(For Eyes have tongues, and glances tell deſires)
Whene'er ſhe drinks, be firſt to take the cup;
And, where ſhe laid her lips, the bleſſing ſup.
When ſhe to carving does her hand advance,
Put out thy own, and touch it as by chance.
Thy ſervice e'en her huſband muſt attend:
(A huſband is a moſt convenient friend.)
Seat the fool cuckold in the higheſt place:
And with thy garland his dull temples grace.
Whether below or equal in degree,
Let him be lord of all the company,
And what he ſays, be ſeconded by thee.
'Tis common to deceive thro' friendſhip's name:
But, common tho' it be, 'tis ſtill to blame:
Thus factors frequently their truſt betray,
And to themſelves their maſters gains convey.
Drink to a certain pitch, and then give o'er;
Thy tongue and feet may ſtumble, drinking more.
Of drunken quarrels in her ſight beware;
Pot-valour only ſerves to fright the fair.
Eurytion juſtly fell, by wine oppreſt,
For his rude riot at a wedding-feaſt,
Sing, if you have a voice; and ſhew your parts
In dancing, if endu'd with dancing arts.
Do any thing within your power to pleaſe;
Nay, e'en affect a ſeeming drunkenneſs;
Clip ev'ry word; and if by chance you ſpeak
Too home, or if too broad a jeſt you break,
In your excuſe the company will join,
And lay the fault upon the force of wine.

True drunkenneſs is ſubject to offend;
But when 'tis feign'd 'tis oft a lover's friend.
Then ſafely you may praiſe her beauteous face,
And call him happy who is in her grace.
Her huſband thinks himſelf the man deſign'd;
But curſe the cuckold in your ſecret mind.
When all are riſen, and prepare to go,
Mix with the croud, and tread upon her toe.
This is the proper time to make thy court;
For now ſhe's in the vein, and fit for ſport.
Lay baſhfulneſs, that ruſtic virtue, by;
To manly confidence thy thoughts apply.
On fortune's foretop timely fix thy hold;
Now ſpeak and ſpeed, for Venus loves the bold.
No rules of rhetoric here I need afford:
Only begin, and truſt the following word;
It will be witty of its own accord.
Act well the lover; let thy ſpeech abound
In dying words, that repreſent thy wound:
Diſtruſt not her belief; ſhe will be mov'd;
All women think they merit to be lov'd.
Sometimes a man begins to love in jeſt,
And, after, feels the torment he profeſt.
For your own ſakes be pitiful, ye fair;
For a feign'd paſſion may a true prepare.
By flatteries we prevail on womankind;
As hollow banks by ſtreams are undermin'd.
Tell her, her face is fair, her eyes are ſweet:
Her taper fingers praiſe, and little feet,
Such praiſes e'en the chaſte are pleas'd to hear;
Both maids and matrons hold their beauty dear.
Once naked Pallas with Jove's queen appear'd;
And ſtill they grieve that Venus was preferr'd.
Praiſe the proud peacock, and he ſpreads his train:
Be ſilent, and he pulls it in again.
Pleas'd is the courſer in his rapid race;
Applaud his running, and he mends his pace.

But largely promiſe, and devoutly ſwear;
And, if need be, call ev'ry God to hear.
Jove ſits above, forgiving with a ſmile
The perjuries that eaſy maids beguile.
He ſwore to Juno by the Stygian lake:
Forſworn, he dares not an example make,
Or puniſh falſhood, for his own dear ſake.
'Tis for our int'reſt that the Gods ſhould be;
Let us believe 'em: I believe, they ſee,
And both reward, and puniſh equally.
Not that they live above like lazy drones,
Or kings below, ſupine upon their thrones.
Lead then your lives as preſent in their ſight;
Be juſt in dealings, and defend the right;
By fraud betray not, nor oppreſs by might.
But 'tis a venial ſin to cheat the fair;
All men have liberty of conſcience there.
On cheating nymphs a cheat is well deſign'd;
'Tis a profane and a deceitful kind.

'Tis ſaid, that Ægypt for nine years was dry,
Nor Nile did floods, nor heav'n did rain ſupply.
A foreigner at length inform'd the king,
That ſlaughter'd gueſts would kindly moiſture bring.
The king reply'd: On thee the lot ſhall fall;
Be thou my gueſt, the ſacrifice for all.
Thus Phaleris Perillus taught to low,
And made him ſeaſon firſt the brazen cow.
A rightful doom, the laws of nature cry,
'Tis, the artificers of death ſhould die.
Thus juſtly women ſuffer by deceit;
Their practice authorizes us to cheat.
Beg her, with tears, thy warm deſires to grant;
For tears will pierce a heart of adamant.
If tears will not be ſqueez'd, then rub your eye,
Or 'noint the lids, and ſeem at leaſt to cry.
Kiſs, if you can; reſiſtance if ſhe make,
And will not give you kiſſes, let her take.

Fy, fy, you naughty man, are words of courſe;
She ſtruggles but to be ſubdu'd by force.
Kiſs only ſoft, I charge you, and beware,
With your hard briſtles not to bruſh the fair.
He who has gain'd a kiſs, and gains no more,
Deſerves to loſe the bliſs he got before.
If once ſhe kiſs, her meaning is expreſt;
There wants but little puſhing for the reſt:
Which if thou doſt not gain by ſtrength or art,
The name of clown well ſuits with thy deſert;
'Tis downright dulneſs, and a ſhameful part.
Perhaps ſhe calls it force; but, if ſhe 'ſcape,
She will not thank you for th' omitted rape.
The ſex is cunning to conceal their fires;
They would be forc'd e'en to their own deſires.
They ſeem t' accuſe you, with a downcaſt ſight,
But in their ſouls confeſs you did them right.
Who might be forc'd, and yet untouch'd depart,
Thank with their tongues, but curſe you with their heart.
Fair Phœbe and her ſiſter did prefer
To their dull mates the noble raviſher.
What Deidamia did; in days of yore,
The tale is old, but worth the reading o'er.
When Venus had the golden apple gain'd,
And the juſt judge fair Helen had obtain'd:
When ſhe with triumph was at Troy receiv'd,
The Trojans joyful, while the Grecians griev'd:
They vow'd revenge of violated laws,
And Greece was arming in the cuckold's cauſe:
Achilles, by his mother warn'd from war,
Diſguis'd his ſex, and lurk'd among the fair.
What means Æacides to ſpin and ſew?
With ſpear and ſword in field thy valour ſhew;
And, leaving this, the nobler Pallas know.
Why doſt thou in that hand the diſtaff wield,
Which is more worthy to ſuſtain the ſhield?

Or

Or with that other draw the woolly twine,
The ſame the fates for Hector's thread aſſign?
Brandiſh thy falchion in thy pow'rful hand,
Which can alone the pond'rous lance command.
In the ſame room by chance the royal maid
Was lodg'd, and, by his ſeeming ſex betray'd,
Cloſe to her ſide the youthful hero laid.
I know not how his courtſhip he began;
But, to her coſt, ſhe found he was a man.
'Tis thought ſhe ſtruggled; but withal 'tis thought,
Her wiſh was to be conquer'd, when ſhe fought.
For when diſclos'd, and haſt'ning to the field,
He laid his diſtaff down, and took the ſhield,
With tears her humble ſuit ſhe did prefer,
And thought to ſtay the grateful raviſher.
She ſighs, ſhe ſobs, ſhe begs him not to part:
And now 'tis nature, what before was art.
She ſtrives by force her lover to detain,
And wiſhes to be raviſh'd once again.
This is the ſex, they will not firſt begin,
But, when compell'd, are pleas'd to ſuffer ſin.
Is there, who thinks that women firſt ſhould woo?
Lay by thy ſelf-conceit, thou fooliſh beau.
Begin, and ſave their modeſty the ſhame;
'Tis well for thee, if they receive thy flame.
'Tis decent for a man to ſpeak his mind;
They but expect th' occaſion to be kind.
Aſk, that thou mayſt enjoy; ſhe waits for this;
And on thy firſt advance depends thy bliſs,
E'en Jove himſelf was forc'd to ſue for love;
None of the nymphs did firſt ſolicit Jove.
But if you find your pray'rs increaſe her pride,
Strike ſail awhile, and wait another tide.
They fly when we purſue; but make delay,
And, when they ſee you ſlacken, they will ſtay.

Sometimes it profits to conceal your end;
Name not yourſelf her lover, but her friend.
How many ſkittiſh girls have thus been caught?
He prov'd a lover, who a friend was thought.
Sailors by ſun and wind are ſwarthy made;
A tann'd complexion beſt becomes their trade.
'Tis a diſgrace to ploughmen to be fair;
Bluff cheeks they have, and weather-beaten hair.
Th' ambitious youth, who ſeeks an olive crown,
Is ſun-burnt with his daily toil, and brown.
But if the lover hopes to be in grace,
Wan be his looks, and meagre be his face.
That colour from the fair compaſſion draws:
She thinks you ſick, and thinks herſelf the cauſe.
Orion wander'd in the woods for love:
His paleneſs did the nymphs to pity move;
His ghaſtly viſage argu'd hidden love.
Nor fail a night-cap, in full health, to wear;
Neglect thy dreſs, and diſcompoſe thy hair.
All things are decent, that in love avail:
Read long by night, and ſtudy to be pale:
Forſake your food, refuſe your needful reſt;
Be miſerable, that you may be bleſt.
Shall I complain, or ſhall I warn you moſt?
Faith, truth, and friendſhip in the world are loſt;
A little and an empty name they boaſt.
Truſt not thy friend, much leſs thy miſtreſs praiſe;
If he believe, thou may'ſt a rival raiſe.
'Tis true, Patroclus, by no luſt miſled,
Sought not to ſtain his dear companion's bed.
Nor Pylades Hermione embrac'd;
E'en Phædra to Pirithous ſtill was chaſte.
But hope not thou, in this vile age, to find
Thoſe rare examples of a faithful mind.
The ſea ſhall ſooner with ſweet honey flow;
Or from the furzes pears and apples grow.

We

We ſin with guſt, we love by fraud to gain;
And find a pleaſure in our fellow's pain.
From rival foes you may the fair defend;
But, would you ward the blow, beware your friend:
Beware your brother, and your next of kin;
But from your boſom-friend your care begin.
Here I had ended, but experience finds,
That ſundry women are of ſundry minds;
With various crotchets fill'd, and hard to pleaſe:
They therefore muſt be caught by various ways.
All things are not produc'd in any ſoil;
This ground for wine is proper, that for oil.
So 'tis in men, but more in womankind:
Diff'rent in face, in manners, and in mind:
But wiſe men ſhift their ſails with every wind:
As changeful Proteus vary'd oft his ſhape,
And did in ſundry forms and figures 'ſcape;
A running ſtream, a ſtanding tree became,
A roaring lion, or a bleating lamb.
Some fiſh with harpons, ſome with darts are ſtruck,
Some drawn with nets, ſome hang upon the hook:
So turn thyſelf; and imitating them,
Try ſev'ral tricks, and change thy ſtratagem.
One rule will not for diff'rent ages hold;
The jades grow cunning, as they grow more old.
Then talk not bawdy to the baſhful maid;
Broad words will make her innocence afraid.
Nor to an ign'rant girl of learning ſpeak;
She thinks you conjure, when you talk in Greek.
And hence 'tis often ſeen, the ſimple ſhun
The learn'd, and into vile embraces run.
Part of my taſk is done, and part to do:
But here tis time to reſt myſelf and you.

FROM

OVID's AMOURS.

BOOK I. ELEG. I.

FOR mighty wars I thought to tune my lute,
And make my meaſures to my ſubject ſuit.
Six feet for ev'ry verſe the muſe deſign'd:
But Cupid, laughing, when he ſaw my mind,
From ev'ry ſecond verſe a foot purloin'd.
Who gave thee, boy, this arbitrary ſway,
On ſubjects, not thy own, commands to lay,
Who Phœbus only and his laws obey?
'Tis more abſurd than if the Queen of Love
Should in Minerva's arms to battle move;
Or manly Pallas from that queen ſhould take
Her torch, and o'er the dying lover ſhake.
In fields as well may Cynthia ſow the corn,
Or Ceres wind in woods the bugle-horn.
As well may Phœbus quit the trembling ſtring,
For ſword and ſhield; and Mars may learn to ſing.
Already thy dominions are too large;
Be not ambitious of a foreign charge.
If thou wilt reign o'er all, and ev'ry where,
The God of Muſick for his harp may fear.
Thus when with ſoaring wings I ſeek renown,
Thou pluck'ſt my pinions, and I flutter down.
Could I on ſuch mean thoughts my Muſe employ,
I want a miſtreſs or a blooming boy.
Thus I complain'd: his bow the ſtripling bent,
And choſe an arrow fit for his intent.

The

The ſhaft his pupoſe fatally purſues;
Now, poet, there's a ſubject for thy Muſe.
He ſaid: too well, alas, he knows his trade;
For in my breaſt a mortal wound he made.
(Far hence, ye proud hexameters, remove)
My verſe is pac'd and trammel'd into love,
With myrtle wreaths my thoughtful brows incloſe,
While in unequal verſe I ſing my woes.

FROM

OVID's AMOURS.

BOOK I. ELEG. 4.

To his miſtreſs, whoſe huſband is invited to a feaſt with them. The poet inſtructs her how to behave herſelf in his company.

YOUR huſband will be with us at the treat;
May that be the laſt ſupper he ſhall eat.
And am poor I a gueſt invited there,
Only to ſee, while he may touch the fair?
To ſee you kiſs and hug your nauſeous lord,
While his leud hand deſcends below the board?
Now wonder not that Hippodamia's charms,
At ſuch a ſight, the Centaurs urg'd to arms;
That in a rage they threw their cups aſide,
Aſſail'd the bridegroom, and would force the bride.
I am not half a horſe, (I would I were)
Yet hardly can from you my hands forbear.
Take then my counſel; which, obſerv'd, may be
Of ſome importance both to you and me.
Be ſure to come before your man be there;
There's nothing can be done; but come howe'er.
Sit next him (that belongs to decency)
But tread upon my foot in paſſing by.
Read in my looks what ſilently they ſpeak,
And ſlily, with your eyes, your anſwer make.
My lifted eye-brow ſhall declare my pain;
My right-hand to his fellow ſhall complain;

And

And on the back a letter ſhall deſign;
Beſides a note that ſhall be writ in wine.
Whene'er you think upon our laſt embrace,
With your fore-finger gently touch your face.
If any word of mine offend my dear,
Pull, with your hand, the velvet of your ear.
If you are pleas'd with what I do or ſay,
Handle your rings, or with your fingers play.
As ſuppliants uſe at altars, hold the board,
Whene'er you wiſh the devil may take your lord.
When he fills for you, never touch the cup,
But bid th' officious cuckold drink it up.
The waiter on thoſe ſervices employ:
Drink you, and I will ſnatch it from the boy;
Watching the part where your ſweet mouth hath been,
And thence with eager lips will ſuck it in.
If he, with clowniſh manners, thinks it fit
To taſte, and offer you the naſty bit,
Reject his greaſy kindneſs, and reſtore
Th' unſav'ry morſel he had chew'd before.
Nor let his arms embrace your neck, nor reſt
Your tender cheek upon his hairy breaſt.
Let not his hand within your boſom ſtray,
And rudely with your pretty bubbies play.
But above all, let him no kiſs receive;
That's an offence I never can forgive.
Do not, O do not that ſweet mouth reſign,
Leſt I riſe up in arms, and cry, 'tis mine.
I ſhall thruſt in betwixt, and void of fear
The manifeſt adult'rer will appear.
Theſe things are plain to ſight; but more I doubt
What you conceal beneath your petticoat.
Take not his leg between your tender thighs,
Nor, with your hand, provoke my foe to riſe.
How many love-inventions I deplore,
Which I myſelf have practis'd all before?

How oft have I been forc'd the robe to lift
In company; to make a homely ſhift
For a bare bout, ill huddled o'er in haſte,
While o'er my ſide the fair her mantle caſt.
You to your huſband ſhall not be ſo kind;
But, leſt you ſhould, your mantle leave behind.
Encourage him to tope; but kiſs him not,
Nor mix one drop of water in his pot,
If he be fuddled well, and ſnores apace,
Then we may take advice from time and place.
When all depart, when compliments are loud,
Be ſure to mix among the thickeſt crowd:
There I will be, and there we cannot miſs,
Perhaps to grubble, or at leaſt to kiſs.
Alas! what length of labour I employ,
Juſt to ſecure a ſhort and tranſient joy!
For night muſt part us; and when night is come,
Tuck'd underneath his arm he leads you home.
He locks you in; I follow to the door,
His fortune envy, and my own deplore.
He kiſſes you, he more than kiſſes too;
Th' outrageous cuckold thinks it all his due.
But add not to his joy by your conſent,
And let it not be given, but only lent.
Return no kiſs, nor move in any ſort;
Make it a dull and a malignant ſport.
Had I my wiſh, he ſhould no pleaſure take,
But ſlubber o'er your buſineſs for my ſake.
And whate'er fortune ſhall this night befal,
Coax me to-morrow, by forſwearing all.

FROM

FROM

OVID's AMOURS.

BOOK II. ELEG. 19.

IF for thyſelf thou wilt not watch thy whore,
Watch her for me, that I may love her more.
What comes with eaſe we nauſeouſly receive,
Who, but a ſot, would ſcorn to love with leave?
With hopes and fears my flames are blown up higher?
Make me deſpair, and then I can deſire.
Give me a jilt to teaze my jealous mind;
Deceits are virtues in the female kind.
Corinna my fantaſtick humour knew,
Play'd trick for trick, and kept herſelf ſtill new:
She, that next night I might the ſharper come,
Fell out with me, and ſent me faſting home;
Or ſome pretence to lie alone would take;
Whene'er ſhe pleas'd, her head, and teeth would ake:
'Till having won me to the higheſt ſtrain,
She took occaſion to be ſweet again.
With what a guſt, ye gods, we then imbrac'd!
How ev'ry kiſs was dearer than the laſt!
Thou whom I now adore, be edify'd,
Take care that I may often be deny'd.
Forget the promis'd hour, or feign ſome fright,
Make me lie rough on bulks each other night.
Theſe are the arts that beſt ſecure thy reign,
And this the food, that muſt my fires maintain.
Groſs eaſy love does, like groſs diet, pall,
In ſqueaſy ſtomachs honey turns to gall.
Had Danaë not been kept in brazen tow'rs,
Jove had not thought her worth his golden ſhow'rs.

When

When Juno to a cow turn'd Io's ſhape,
The watchman help'd her to a ſecond leap.
Let him who loves an eaſy Whetſtone whore,
Pluck leaves from trees, and drink the common ſhore.
The jilting harlot ſtrikes the ſureſt blow,
A truth which I by ſad experience know.
The kind poor conſtant creature we deſpiſe;
Man but purſues the quarry while it flies.
But thou dull huſband of a wife too fair,
Stand on thy guard, and watch the precious ware:
If creaking doors, or barking dogs thou hear,
Or windows ſcratch'd, ſuſpect a rival there.
An orange wench would tempt thy wife abroad;
Kick her, for ſhe's a letter-bearing bawd;
In ſhort, be jealous as the devil in hell;
And ſet my wit on work to cheat thee well.
The ſneaking city-cuckold is my foe,
I ſcorn to ſtrike, but when he wards the blow.
Look to thy hits, and leave off thy conniving,
I'll be no drudge to any wittol living;
I have been patient, and forborn thee long,
In hope thou wouldſt not pocket up thy wrong:
If no affront can rouſe thee, underſtand
I'll take no more indulgence at thy hand.
What, ne'er to be forbid thy houſe, and wife!
Damn him who loves to lead ſo ill a life.
Now I can neither ſigh, nor whine, nor pray,
All thoſe occaſions thou haſt ta'en away.
Why art thou ſo incorrigibly civil?
Do ſomewhat I may wiſh thee at the devil.
For ſhame be no accomplice in my treaſon,
A pimping huſband is too much in reaſon.
Once more wear horns, before I quite forſake her,
In hopes whereof, I reſt thy cuckold-maker.

TRANSLA-

TRANSLATIONS

FROM

OVID's METAMORPHOSES.

L

TO THE

* RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD RADCLIFFE.

My LORD,

THESE Miſcellany Poems are by many titles yours. The firſt they claim from your acceptance of my promiſe to preſent them to you, before ſome of them were yet in being. The reſt are derived from your own merit, the exactneſs of your judgment in poetry, and the candour of your nature; eaſy to forgive ſome trivial faults when they come accompanied with countervailing beauties. But, after all, though theſe are your equitable claims to a dedication from other Poets, yet I muſt acknowledge a bribe in the caſe, which is your particular liking of my verſes. It is a vanity common to all writers, to over-value their own productions; and it is better for me to own this failing in myſelf, than the world to do it for me. For what other reaſon have I ſpent my life in ſo unprofitable a ſtudy? why am I grown old, in ſeeking ſo barren a reward as fame? The ſame parts and application, which have made me a poet, might have raiſed me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning and leſs honeſty than myſelf. No government has ever been, or ever can be, wherein time-ſervers and blockheads will not be uppermoſt. The perſons are only changed, but the ſame jugglings in ſtate, the ſame hypocriſy in religion, the ſame ſelf-intereſt, and miſmanagement, will remain for ever. Blood and money

* Prefixed to the Third Volume of Dryden's Miſcellany Poems, printed in 1693.

will

will be laviſhed in all ages, only for the preferment of new faces, with old conſciences. There is too often a jaundice in the eyes of great men; they ſee not thoſe whom they raiſe in the ſame colours with other men. All whom they affect, look golden to them; when the gilding is only in their own diſtempered ſight. Theſe conſiderations have given me a kind of contempt for thoſe who have riſen by unworthy ways. I am not aſhamed to be little, when I ſee them ſo infamouſly great; neither do I know why the name of poet ſhould be diſhonourable to me if I am truly one, as I hope I am; for I will never do any thing that ſhall diſhonour it. The notions of morality are known to all men: none can pretend ignorance of thoſe ideas which are in-born in mankind: and if I ſee one thing, and practiſe the contrary, I muſt be diſingenuous, not to acknowledge a clear truth, and baſe to act againſt the light of my own conſcience. For the reputation of my honeſty, no man can queſtion it, who has any of his own: for that of my poetry, it ſhall either ſtand by its own merit; or fall for want of it. Ill writers are uſually the ſharpeſt cenſors: for they (as the beſt poet and the beſt patron ſaid) when in the full perfection of decay, turn vinegar, and come again in play. Thus the corruption of a poet is the generation of a critick: I mean of a critick in the general acceptation of this age: for formerly they were quite another ſpecies of men. They were defenders of poets, and commentators on their works; to illuſtrate obſcure beauties; to place ſome paſſages in a better light; to redeem others from malicious interpretations; to help out an author's modeſty, who is not oſtentatious of his wit; and, in ſhort, to ſhield him from the ill-nature of thoſe fellows, who were then called Zoili and Momi, and now take upon themſelves the venerable name of cenſors. But neither Zoilus, nor he who endeavoured to defame Virgil, were ever adopted into the name of criticks by the ancients: what their reputation was then, we know; and their ſucceſſors in this age deſerve

ſerve no better. Are our auxiliary forces turned our enemies? are they, who at beſt, are but wits of the ſecond order, and whoſe only credit amongſt readers, is what they obtained by being ſubſervient to the fame of writers, are theſe become rebels of ſlaves, and uſurpers of ſubjects; or, to ſpeak in the moſt honourable terms of them, are they from our ſeconds become principals againſt us? does the ivy undermine the oak, which ſupports its weakneſs? what labour would it coſt them to put in a better line, than the worſt of thoſe which they expunge in a true poet? Petronius, the greateſt wit perhaps of all the Romans, yet when his envy prevailed upon his judgment to fall on Lucan, he fell himſelf in his attempt: he performed worſe in his Eſſay of the Civil War, than the author of the Pharſalia: and avoiding his errors, has made greater of his own. Julius Scaliger would needs turn down Homer, and abdicate him after the poſſeſſion of three thouſand years: has he ſucceeded in his attempt? he has indeed ſhown us ſome of thoſe imperfections in him, which are incident to human kind: but who had not rather be that Homer than this Scaliger? You ſee the ſame hypercritick, when he endeavours to mend the beginning of Claudian (a faulty poet and living in a barbarous age) yet how ſhort he comes of him, and ſubſtitutes ſuch verſes of his own as deſerve the ferula. What a cenſure has he made of Lucan, that he rather ſeems to bark than ſing? would any but a dog, have made ſo ſnarling a compariſon? one would have thought he had learned Latin, as late as they tell us he did Greek. Yet he came off, with a *pace tuâ*, by your good leave, Lucan; he called him not by thoſe outrageous names, of fool, booby, and blockhead: he had ſomewhat more of good manners, than his ſucceſſors, as he had much more knowledge. We have two ſorts of thoſe gentlemen, in our nation: ſome of them proceeding with a ſeeming moderation and pretence of reſpect, to the dramatick writers of the laſt age, only ſcorn and vilify the preſent poets, to ſet up their predeceſſors.

ceſſors. But this is only in appearance; for their real deſign is nothing leſs than to do honour to any man, beſides themſelves. Horace took notice of ſuch men in his age: *Non ingeniis favet ille, ſepultis; noſtra ſed impugnat; nos noſtraque lividus odit.* It is not with an ultimate intention to pay reverence to the manes of Shakeſpear, Fletcher, and Ben Johnſon, that they commend their writings, but to throw dirt on the writers of this age: their declaration is one thing, and their practice is another. By a ſeeming veneration to our fathers, they would thruſt out us their lawful iſſue, and govern us themſelves, under a ſpecious pretence of reformation. If they could compaſs their intent, what would wit and learning get by ſuch a change? if we are bad poets, they are worſe; and when any of their woeful pieces come abroad, the difference is ſo great betwixt them and good writers, that there need no criticiſms on our part to decide it. When they deſcribe the writers of this age, they draw ſuch monſtrous figures of them, as reſemble none of us: our pretended pictures are ſo unlike, that it is evident we never ſat to them: they are all groteſque; the products of their wild imaginations, things out of nature, ſo far from being copied from us, that they reſemble nothing that ever was, or ever can be. But there is another ſort of inſects, more venomous than the former. Thoſe who manifeſtly aim at the deſtruction of our poetical church and ſtate; who allow nothing to their country-men, either of this or of the former age. Theſe attack the living by raking up the aſhes of the dead; well knowing that if they can ſubvert their original title to the ſtage, we who claim under them muſt fall of courſe. Peace be to the venerable ſhades of Shakeſpear, and Ben Johnſon: none of the living will preſume to have any competition with them: as they were our predeceſſors, ſo they were our maſters. We trail our plays under them, but (as at the funerals of a Turkiſh emperor) our enſigns are furled or dragged upon the ground, in honour to the dead; ſo we may lawfully advance our own,

own, afterwards, to ſhow that we ſucceed: if leſs in dignity, yet on the ſame foot and title, which we think too we can maintain againſt the inſolence of our own janizaries. If I am the man, as I have reaſon to believe, who am ſeemingly courted, and ſecretly undermined; I think I ſhall be able to defend myſelf, when I am openly attacked. And to ſhew beſides that the Greek writers only gave us the rudiments of a ſtage which they never finiſhed: that many of the tragedies in the former age amongſt us, were without compariſon beyond thoſe of Sophocles and Euripides. But at preſent, I have neither the leiſure nor the means for ſuch an undertaking. It is ill going to law for an eſtate, with him who is in poſſeſſion of it, and enjoys the preſent profits, to feed his cauſe. But the *quantum mutatus* may be remembered in due time. In the mean while, I leave the world to judge, who gave the provocation.

This, my Lord, is, I confeſs, a long digreſſion, from Miſcellany Poems to Modern Tragedies: but I have the ordinary excuſe of an injured man, who will be telling his tale unſeaſonably to his betters; though, at the ſame time, I am certain you are ſo good a friend, as to take a concern in all things which belong to one who ſo truly honours you. And beſides, being yourſelf a critick of the genuine ſort, who have read the beſt authors in their own languages, who perfectly diſtinguiſh of their ſeveral merits, and in general prefer them to the moderns, yet, I know, you judge for the Engliſh tragedies, againſt the Greek and Latin, as well as againſt the French, Italian, and Spaniſh, of theſe latter ages. Indeed there is a vaſt difference betwixt arguing like Perault in behalf of the French poets, againſt Homer and Virgil, and betwixt giving the Engliſh poets their undoubted due of excelling Æſchylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. For if we, or our greater fathers, have not yet brought the drama to an abſolute perfection, yet at leaſt we have carried it much farther than thoſe ancient Greeks; who, beginning from a Chorus, could never totally

exclude it, as we have done; who find it an unprofitable incumbrance, without any neceſſity of entertaining it amongſt us; and without the poſſibility of eſtabliſhing it here, unleſs it were ſupported by a publick charge. Neither can we accept of thoſe lay-biſhops, as ſome call them, who, under pretence of reforming the ſtage, would intrude themſelves upon us, as our ſuperiors, being indeed incompetent judges of what is manners, what religion, and leaſt of all, what is poetry and good ſenſe. I can tell them in behalf of all my fellows, that when they come to exerciſe a Juriſdiction over us, they ſhall have the ſtage to themſelves, as they have the laurel. As little can I grant, that the French dramatick writers excel the Engliſh: our authors as far ſurpaſs them in genius, as our ſoldiers excel theirs in courage: it is true, in conduct they ſurpaſs us either way: yet that proceeds not ſo much from their greater knowledge, as from the difference of taſtes in the two nations. They content themſelves with a thin deſign, without epiſodes, and managed by few perſons. Our audience will not be pleaſed but with variety of accidents, an underplot, and many actors. They follow the ancients too ſervilely, in the mechanick rules, and we aſſume too much licence to ourſelves, in keeping them only in view, at too great a diſtance. But if our audience had their taſtes, our poets could more eaſily comply with them, than the French writers could come up to the ſublimity of our thoughts, or to the difficult variety of our deſigns. However it be, I dare eſtabliſh it for a rule of practice on the ſtage, that we are bound to pleaſe thoſe whom we pretend to entertain; and that at any price, religion and good manners only excepted; and I care not much, if I give this handle to our bad illiterate poetaſters, for the defence of their Scriptions, as they call them. There is a ſort of merit in delighting the ſpectators; which is a name more proper for them, than that of auditors: or elſe Horace is in the wrong, when he commends Lucilius for it. But theſe common places I mean to treat at greater leiſure: in the mean time,

time, ſubmitting that little I have ſaid, to your Lordſhip's approbation, or your cenſure, and chuſing rather to entertain you this way, as you are a judge of writing, than to oppreſs your modeſty with other commendations; which, though they are your due, yet would not be equally received in this ſatirical and cenſorious age. That which cannot without injury be denied to you, is the eaſineſs of your converſation, far from affectation or pride: not denying even to enemies their juſt praiſes. And this, if I would dwell on any theme of this nature, is no vulgar commendation to your Lordſhip. Without flattery, my Lord, you have it in your nature, to be a patron and encourager of good poets, but your fortune has not yet put into your hands the opportunity of expreſſing it. What you will be hereafter, may be more than gueſs'd, by what you are at preſent. You maintain the character of a nobleman, without that haughtineſs which generally attends too many of the nobility, and when you converſe with gentlemen, you forget not that you have been of their order. You are married to the daughter of a king *, who, amongſt her other high perfections, has derived from him a charming behaviour, a winning goodneſs, and a majeſtick perſon. The Muſes and the Graces are the ornaments of your family; while the Muſe ſings, the Grace accompanies her voice: even the ſervants of the Muſes have ſometimes had the happineſs to hear her; and to receive their inſpirations from her.

I will not give myſelf the liberty of going farther; for it is ſo ſweet to wander in a pleaſing way, that I ſhould never arrive at my journey's end. To keep myſelf from being belated in my letter, and tiring your attention, I muſt return to the place where I was ſetting out. I humbly dedicate to your Lordſhip, my own labours in this Miſcellany: at the ſame time, not arrogating to myſelf the privilege of inſcribing

* Mary Tudor, daughter of King Charles II. by Mrs. Mary Davis. She was born October 16, 1673, and married in Auguſt, 1687.

to you, the works of others who are joined with me in this undertaking, over which I can pretend no right. Your lady and you have done me the favour to hear me read my tranſlations of Ovid; and you both ſeemed not to be diſpeaſed with them. Whether it be the partiality of an old man to his youngeſt child, I know not: but they appear to me the beſt of all my endeavours in this kind. Perhaps this poet is more eaſy to be tranſlated than ſome others, whom I have lately attempted: perhaps too, he was more according to my genius. He is certainly more palatable to the reader, than any of the Roman wits, though ſome of them are more lofty, ſome more inſtructive, and others more correct. He had learning enough to make him equal to the beſt. But as his verſe came eaſily, he wanted the toil of application to amend it. He is often luxuriant both in his fancy and expreſſions, and as it has lately been obſerved, not always natural. If wit be pleaſantry, he has it to exceſs; but if it be propriety, Lucretius, Horace, and above all, Virgil are his ſuperiors. I have ſaid ſo much of him already, in my preface to his Heroical epiſtles, that there remains little to be added in this place: for my own part, I have endeavoured to copy his character what I could in this tranſlation, even, perhaps, farther than I ſhould have done; to his very faults. Mr. Chapman, in his tranſlation of Homer, profeſſes to have done it ſomewhat paraphraſtically, and that on ſet purpoſe; his opinion being, that a good poet is to be tranſlated in that manner. I remember not the reaſon which he gives for it: but I ſuppoſe it is, for fear of omitting any of his excellencies: ſure I am, that if it be a fault, it is much more pardonable than that of thoſe, who run into the other extreme of a literal and cloſe tranſlation, where the poet is confined ſo ſtreightly to his author's words, that he wants elbow-room to expreſs his elegancies. He leaves him obſcure; he leaves him proſe, where he found him verſe: and no better than thus has Ovid been ſerved by the ſo much admired Sandys. This is at leaſt the

idea

idea which I have remaining of his tranſlation; for I never read him ſince I was a boy. They who take him upon content, from the praiſes which their fathers gave him, may inform their judgment by reading them again, and ſee (if they underſtand the original) what is become of Ovid's poetry, in his verſion; whether it be not all, or the greateſt part of it, evaporated: but this proceeded from the wrong judgment of the age in which he lived. They neither knew good verſe nor loved it; they were ſcholars, it is true, but they were pedants. And for a juſt reward of their pedantick pains, all their tranſlations want to be tranſlated into Engliſh.

If I flatter not myſelf, or if my friends have not flattered me, I have given my author's ſenſe, for the moſt part truly: for to miſtake ſometimes is incident to all men, and not to follow the Dutch commentators always, may be forgiven to a man who thinks them in the general, heavy groſs-witted fellows, fit only to gloſs on their own dull poets. But I leave a farther ſatire on their wit, till I have a better opportunity to ſhew how much I love and honour them. I have likewiſe attempted to reſtore Ovid to his native ſweetneſs, eaſineſs, and ſmoothneſs; and to give my poetry a kind of cadence, and, as we call it, a run of verſe, as like the original, as the Engliſh can come up to the Latin. As he ſeldom uſes any Synalephas, ſo I have endeavoured to avoid them, as often as I could: I have likewiſe given him his own turns, both on the words and on the thought, which I cannot ſay are inimitable, becauſe I have copied them; and ſo many others, if they uſe the ſame diligence: but certainly they are wonderfully graceful in this poet. Since I have named the Synalepha, which is the cutting off one vowel immediately before another, I will give an example of it from Chapman's Homer, which lies before me; for the benefit of thoſe who underſtand not the Latin Proſodia. It is in the firſt line of the argument to the firſt Iliad.

Apollo's prieſt to th' Argive fleet doth bring, &c.

There we ſee he makes it not the Argive, but th' Argive, to ſhun the ſhock of the two vowels, immediately following each other; but, in his ſecond argument, in the ſame page, he gives a bad example of the quite contrary kind:

Alpha the pray'r of Chryſes ſings
The army's plague, the ſtrife of kings.

In theſe words *the armies*, *the* ending with a vowel, and *armies* beginning with another vowel, without cutting off the firſt, which by it had been th' armies, there remains a moſt horrible ill-ſounding gap betwixt thoſe words. I cannot ſay that I have every way obſerved the rule of the Synalepha in my tranſlation; but whereſoever I have not, it is a fault in ſound: the French and the Italians have made it an inviolable precept in their verſification; therein following the ſevere example of the Latin poets. Our countrymen have not yet reformed their poetry ſo far, but content themſelves with following the licentious practice of the Greeks; who, though they ſometimes uſe Synalephas, yet make no difficulty very often, to ſound one vowel upon another; as Homer does, in the very firſt line of Alpha. Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος. It is true, indeed, that in the ſecond line, in theſe words μυρὶ Ἀχαιοῖς, and ἀλγε' ἔθηκε, the Synalepha in revenge is twice obſerved. But it becomes us, for the ſake of Euphony, rather *Muſas colere ſeveriores*, with the Romans, than to give into the looſeneſs of the Grecians.

I have tired myſelf, and have been ſummoned by the preſs to ſend away this Dedication, otherwiſe I had expoſed ſome other faults, which are daily committed by our Engliſh poets; which, with care and obſervation, might be amended. For, after all, our language is both copious, ſignificant and majeſtical, and might be reduced into a more harmonious ſound. But, for want of publick encouragement, in this iron age, we are ſo far from making any progreſs in the improvement of our tongue, that in few years,

years, we ſhall ſpeak and write as barbarouſly as our neighbours.

Notwithſtanding my haſte, I cannot forbear to tell your Lordſhip, that there are two fragments of Homer tranſlated in this Miſcellany; one by Mr. Congreve (whom I cannot mention without the honour which is due to his excellent parts, and that entire affection which I bear him) and the other by myſelf. Both the ſubjects are pathetical, and I am ſure my friend has added to the tenderneſs which he found in the original, and, without flattery, ſurpaſſed his author. Yet I muſt needs ſay this in reference to Homer, that he is much more capable of exciting the manly paſſions than thoſe of grief and pity. To cauſe admiration, is indeed the proper and adequate deſign of an epick poem: and in that he has excelled even Virgil; yet, without preſuming to arraign our maſter, I may venture to affirm, that he is ſomewhat too talkative, and more than ſomewhat too digreſſive. This is ſo manifeſt, that it cannot be denied, in that little parcel which I have tranſlated, perhaps too literally: there Andromache, in the midſt of her concernment, and fright for Hector, runs off her bias, to tell him a ſtory of her pedigree, and of the lamentable death of her father, her mother, and her ſeven brothers. The devil was in Hector if he knew not all this matter, as well as ſhe who told it him; for ſhe had been his bedfellow for many years together: and if he knew it, then it muſt be confeſs'd, that Homer in this long digreſſion, has rather given her his own character, than that of the fair lady whom he paints. His dear friends the commentators, who never fail him at a pinch, will needs excuſe him, by making the preſent ſorrow of Andromache, to occaſion the remembrance of all the paſt: but others think that ſhe had enough to do with that grief which now oppreſſed her, without running for aſſiſtance to her family. Virgil, I am confident, would have omitted ſuch a work of ſupererogation. But Virgil had the

gift of expreſſing much in little, and ſometimes in ſilence: for though he yielded much to Homer in invention, he more excelled him in his admirable judgment. He drew the paſſion of Dido for Æneas, in the moſt lively and moſt natural colours imaginable: Homer was ambitious enough of moving pity, for he has attempted twice on the ſame ſubject of Hector's death: firſt, when Priam and Hecuba beheld his corps, which was dragged after the chariot of Achilles: and then in the lamentation which was made over him, when his body was redeemed by Priam; and the ſame perſons again bewailed his death, with a chorus of others to help the cry. But if this laſt excite compaſſion in you, as I doubt not but it will, you are more obliged to the tranſlator than the poet: for Homer, as I obſerved before, can move rage better than he can pity: he ſtirs up the iraſcible appetite, as our philoſophers call it; he provokes to murder, and the deſtruction of God's images; he forms and equips thoſe ungodly man-killers, whom we poets, when we flatter them, call heroes; a race of men who can never enjoy quiet in themſelves, 'till they have taken it from all the world. This is Homer's commendation, and ſuch as it is, the lovers of peace, or at leaſt of more moderate heroiſm, will never envy him. But let Homer and Virgil contend for the prize of honour, betwixt themſelves, I am ſatisfied they will never have a third concurrent. I wiſh Mr. Congreve had the leiſure to tranſlate him, and the world the good nature and juſtice to encourage him in that noble deſign, of which he is more capable than any man I know. The earl of Mulgrave and Mr. Waller, two the beſt judges of our age, have aſſured me, that they could never read over the tranſlation of Chapman, without incredible pleaſure and extreme tranſport. This admiration of theirs muſt needs proceed from the author himſelf: for the tranſlator has thrown him down as low as harſh numbers, improper Engliſh, and a monſtrous length of verſe could carry him.

What then would he appear in the harmonious verſion of one of the beſt writers, living in a much better age than was the laſt? I mean for verſification, and the art of numbers: for in the drama we have not arrived to the pitch of Shakeſpear and Ben Johnſon. But here, my Lord, I am forced to break off abruptly, without endeavouring at a compliment in the cloſe. This Miſcellany is, without diſpute, one of the beſt of the kind, which has hitherto been extant in our tongue. At leaſt, as Sir Samuel Tuke has ſaid before me, a modeſt man may praiſe what is not his own. My fellows have no need of any protection, but I humbly recommend my part of it, as much as it deſerves, to your patronage and acceptance, and all the reſt to your forgiveneſs. I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordſhip's moſt

obedient Servant,

John Dryden.

THE

FIRST BOOK

OF

OVID's METAMORPHOSES.

OF bodies chang'd to various forms I ſing:
Ye Gods, from whence theſe miracles did ſpring,
Inſpire my numbers with celeſtial heat;
'Till I my long laborious work compleat;
And add perpetual tenor to my rhymes,
Deduc'd from nature's birth, to Cæſar's times.

Before

Before the ſeas, and this terreſtrial ball,
And heaven's high canopy, that covers all,
One was the face of nature, if a face;
Rather a rude and indigeſted maſs:
A lifeleſs lump, unfaſhion'd, and unfram'd,
Of jarring ſeeds, and juſtly Chaos nam'd.
No ſun was lighted up the world to view;
No moon did yet her blunted horns renew:
Nor yet was earth ſuſpended in the ſky;
Nor, pois'd, did on her own foundations lie:
Nor ſeas about the ſhores their arms had thrown;
But earth, and air, and water, were in one.
Thus air was void of light, and earth unſtable,
And water's dark abyſs unnavigable.
No certain form on any was impreſt;
All were confus'd, and each diſturb'd the reſt.
For hot and cold were in one body fixt,
And ſoft with hard, and light with heavy mixt.
But God, or Nature, while they thus contend,
To theſe inteſtine diſcords put an end.
Then earth from air, and ſeas from earth were driv'n,
And groſſer air ſunk from ætherial heav'n.
Thus diſembroil'd, they take their proper place;
The next of kin contiguouſly embrace;
And foes are ſunder'd by a larger ſpace.
The force of fire aſcended firſt on high,
And took its dwelling in the vaulted ſky.
Then air ſucceeds, in lightneſs next to fire:
Whoſe atoms from unactive earth retire.
Earth ſinks beneath, and draws a num'rous throng
Of pond'rous, thick, unwieldy ſeeds along.
About her coaſts unruly waters roar,
And, riſing on a ridge, inſult the ſhore.
Thus when the God, whatever God was he,
Had form'd the whole, and made the parts agree,
That no unequal portions might be found,
He moulded earth into a ſpacious round:

Then, with a breath, he gave the winds to blow;
And bade the congregated waters flow.
He adds the running ſprings, and ſtanding lakes;
And bounding banks for winding rivers makes.
Some part in earth are ſwallow'd up, the moſt
In ample oceans, diſembogu'd, are loſt.
He ſhades the woods, the vallies he reſtrains
With rocky mountains, and extends the plains.
And as five zones th' ætherial regions bind,
Five, correſpondent, are to earth aſſign'd:
The ſun with rays, directly darting down,
Fires all beneath, and fries the middle zone:
The two beneath the diſtant poles complain
Of endleſs winter, and perpetual rain.
Betwixt th' extremes, two happier climates hold
The temper that partakes of hot and cold.
The fields of liquid air, incloſing all,
Surround the compaſs of this earthly ball:
The lighter parts lie next the fires above;
The groſſer near the watry ſurface move:
Thick clouds are ſpread, and ſtorms engender there,
And thunder's voice, which wretched mortals fear,
And winds that on their wings cold winter bear.
Nor were thoſe bluſtring brethren left at large,
On ſeas and ſhores their fury to diſcharge:
Bound as they are, and circumſcrib'd in place,
They rend the world, reſiſtleſs, where they paſs;
And mighty marks of miſchief leave behind;
Such is the rage of their tempeſtuous kind.
Firſt Eurus to the riſing morn is ſent,
(The regions of the balmy continent)
And Eaſtern realms, where early Perſians run,
To greet the bleſt appearance of the ſun.
Weſtward the wanton Zephyr wings his flight,
Pleas'd with the remnants of departing light:
Fierce Boreas with his offspring iſſues forth,
To invade the frozen waggon of the North.

While frowning Auſter ſeeks the ſouthern ſphere,
And rots, with endleſs rain, th' unwholſome year.
High o'er the clouds, and empty realms of wind,
The God a clearer ſpace for heav'n deſign'd;
Where fields of light, and liquid æther flow,
Purg'd from the pond'rous dregs of earth below.
Scarce had the pow'r diſtinguiſh'd theſe, when ſtraight
The ſtars no longer overlaid with weight,
Exert their heads from underneath the maſs,
And upward ſhoot, and kindle as they paſs,
And with diffuſive light adorn the heav'nly place.
Then, ev'ry void of nature to ſupply,
With forms of Gods he fills the vacant ſky:
New herds of beaſts he ſends, the plains to ſhare;
New colonies of birds, to people air;
And to their oozy beds the finny fiſh repair.
A creature of a more exalted kind
Was wanting yet, and then was man deſign'd:
Conſcious of thought, of more capacious breaſt,
For empire form'd, and fit to rule the reſt:
Whether with particles of heav'nly fire
The God of nature did his ſoul inſpire;
Or earth, but new divided from the ſky,
And pliant ſtill, retain'd th' ætherial energy:
Which wiſe Prometheus temper'd into paſte,
And, mixt with living ſtreams, the godlike image caſt.
Thus, while the mute creation downward bend
Their ſight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary ſkies.
From ſuch rude principles our form began,
And earth was metamorphos'd into man.

The GOLDEN AGE.

The golden age was firſt; when man, yet new,
No rule but uncorrupted reaſon knew;
And, with a native bent, did good purſue.
Unforc'd by puniſhment, unaw'd by fear,
His words were ſimple, and his ſoul ſincere:
Needleſs was written-law, where none oppreſt;
The law of man was written in his breaſt:
No ſuppliant crowds before the judge appear'd;
No court erected yet, nor cauſe was heard;
But all was ſafe, for conſcience was their guard.
The mountain-trees in diſtant proſpect pleaſe,
Ere yet the pine deſcended to the ſeas;
Ere ſails were ſpread, new oceans to explore;
And happy mortals, unconcern'd for more,
Confin'd their wiſhes to their native ſhore.
No walls were yet, nor fence, nor mote, nor mound;
Nor drum was heard, nor trumpet's angry ſound:
Nor ſwords were forg'd; but, void of care and crime,
The ſoft creation ſlept away their time.
The teeming earth, yet guiltleſs of the plough,
And unprovok'd, did fruitful ſtores allow:
Content with food, which nature freely bred.
On wildings and on ſtrawberries they fed;
Cornels and bramble-berries gave the reſt,
And falling acorns furniſh'd out a feaſt.
The flow'rs unſown in fields and meadows reign'd;
And weſtern winds immortal ſpring maintain'd.
In following years the bearded corn enſu'd
From earth unaſk'd, nor was that earth renew'd.
From veins of vallies milk and nectar broke
And honey ſweating thro' the pores of oak.

The

The SILVER AGE.

But when good Saturn baniſh'd from above,
Was driv'n to hell, the world was under Jove.
Succeeding times a ſilver age behold,
Excelling braſs, but more excell'd by gold.
Then Summer, Autumn, Winter did appear;
And Spring was but a ſeaſon of the year.
The ſun his annual courſe obliquely made,
Good days contracted, and enlarg'd the bad.
Then air with ſultry heats began to glow,
The wings of winds were clog'd with ice and ſnow;
And ſhivering mortals, into houſes driv'n,
Sought ſhelter from th' inclemency of heav'n.
Thoſe houſes, then, were caves, or homely ſheds,
With twining oziers fenc'd, and moſs their beds.
Then ploughs, for ſeed, the fruitful furrows broke,
And oxen labour'd firſt beneath the yoke.

The BRAZEN AGE.

To this next came in courſe the brazen age:
A warlike offspring prompt to bloody rage,
Not impious yet———

The IRON AGE.

———Hard ſteel ſucceeded then;
And ſtubborn as the metal were the men.
Truth, Modeſty, and Shame, the world forſook:
Fraud, Avarice, and Force, their places took.
Then ſails were ſpread to ev'ry wind that blew;
Raw were the ſailors, and the depths were new:
Trees rudely hollow'd, did the waves ſuſtain;
Ere ſhips in triumph plough'd the watry plain.
Then land-marks limited to each his right:
For all before was common as the light.

Nor

Nor was the ground alone requir'd to bear
Her annual income to the crooked ſhare;
But greedy mortals rummaging her ſtore,
Digg'd from her entrails firſt the precious ore;
Which next to hell the prudent Gods had laid;
And that alluring ill to ſight diſplay'd;
Thus curſed ſteel, and more accurſed gold
Gave miſchief birth, and made that miſchief bold:
And double death did wretched man invade,
By ſteel aſſaulted, and by gold betray'd.
Now (brandiſh'd weapons glitt'ring in their hands)
Mankind is broken looſe from moral bands;
No rights of hoſpitality remain:
The gueſt, by him who harbour'd him, is ſlain:
The ſon-in-law purſues the father's life;
The wife her huſband murders, he the wife.
The ſtep-dame poiſon for the ſon prepares;
The ſon inquires into his father's years.
Faith flies, and Piety in exile mourns;
And Juſtice here oppreſt, to heav'n returns.

The GIANTS WAR.

Nor were the Gods themſelves more ſafe above;
Againſt beleaguer'd heav'n the giants move.
Hills pil'd on hills, on mountains mountains lie,
To make their mad approaches to the ſky.
Till Jove, no longer patient, took his time
T' avenge with thunder their audacious crime:
Red light'ning play'd along the firmament,
And their demoliſh'd works to pieces rent.
Sing'd with the flames, and with the bolts transfix'd,
With native earth their blood the monſters mix'd;
The blood, indu'd with animating heat,
Did in th' impregnate earth new ſons beget:

They, like the ſeed from which they ſprung, accurſt,
Againſt the Gods immortal hatred nurſt:
An impious, arrogant, and cruel brood;
Expreſſing their original from blood.
Which when the king of Gods beheld from high
(Withal revolving in his memory,
What he himſelf had found on earth of late,
Lycaon's guilt, and his inhuman treat)
He ſigh'd, nor longer with his pity ſtrove;
But kindled to a wrath becoming Jove;
Then call'd a general council of the Gods;
Who, ſummon'd, iſſue from their bleſt abodes,
And fill th' aſſembly with a ſhining train.
A way there is in heav'n's expanded plain,
Which, when the ſkies are clear, is ſeen below,
And mortals by the name of milky know.
The ground-work is of ſtars; through which the road
Lies open to the thunderer's abode.
The Gods of greater nations dwell around,
And, on the right and left the palace bound;
The commons where they can; the nobler ſort,
With winding doors wide open, front the court.
This place, as far as earth with heav'n may vie,
I dare to call the Louvre of the ſky.
When all were plac'd, in ſeats diſtinctly known,
And he their father had aſſum'd the throne,
Upon his iv'ry ſcepter firſt he leant,
Then ſhook his head that ſhook the firmament:
Air, earth, and ſeas, obey'd th' almighty nod;
And, with a general fear, confeſs'd the God.
At length with indignation, thus he broke
His awful ſilence, and the pow'rs beſpoke.

I was not more concern'd in that debate
Of empire, when our univerſal ſtate
Was put to hazard, and the giant race
Our captive ſkies were ready to embrace:

For tho' the foe was fierce, the seeds of all
Rebellion sprung from one original;
Now whereſoever ambient waters glide,
All are corrupt and all muſt be deſtroy'd.
Let me this holy proteſtation make:
By hell and hell's inviolable lake,
I try'd whatever in the God-head lay,
But gangren'd members muſt be lopt away,
Before the nobler parts are tainted to decay.
There dwells below a race of Demi-gods,
Of nymphs in waters, and of fawns in woods:
Who, tho' not worthy yet in heav'n to live,
Let 'em at leaſt enjoy that earth we give.
Can theſe be thought ſecurely lodg'd below,
When I myſelf, who no ſuperior know,
I, who have heav'n and earth at my command,
Have been attempted by Lycaon's hand?

At this a murmur thro' the ſynod went;
And with one voice they vote his puniſhment.
Thus, when conſpiring traitors, dar'd to doom
The fall of Cæſar, and in him of Rome,
The nations trembled with a pious fear;
All anxious for their earthly thunderer:
Nor was their care, O Cæſar, leſs eſteem'd
By thee, than that of heaven for Jove was deem'd:
Who with his hand, and voice, did firſt reſtrain
Their murmurs, then reſum'd his ſpeech again,
The Gods to ſilence were compos'd, and ſat
With rev'rence due to his ſuperior ſtate.

Cancel your pious cares; already he
Has paid his debt to juſtice, and to me.
Yet what his crimes, and what my judgments were,
Remains for me thus briefly to declare.
The clamours of this vile degenerate age,
The cries of orphans, and th' oppreſſ'r's rage,

Had reach'd the ſtars; I will deſcend, ſaid I,
In hope to prove this loud complaint a lie.
Diſguiſ'd in human ſhape, I travell'd round
The world, and more than what I heard, I found.
O'er Mænalus I took my ſteepy way,
By caverns infamous for beaſts of prey:
Then croſs'd Cyllene, and the piny ſhade,
More infamous by curſt Lycaon made:
Dark night had cover'd heav'n and earth, before
I enter'd his unhoſpitable door.
Juſt at my entrance, I diſplay'd the ſign
That ſomewhat was approaching of divine.
The proſtrate people pray; the tyrant grins;
And, adding prophanation to his ſins,
I'll try, ſaid he, and if a God appear,
To prove his deity ſhall coſt him dear.
'Twas late; the graceleſs wretch my death prepares,
When I ſhould ſoundly ſleep, oppreſt with cares:
This dire experiment he choſe, to prove
If I were mortal, or undoubted Jove:
But firſt he had reſolv'd to taſte my pow'r:
Not long before, but in a luckleſs hour,
Some legates ſent from the Moloſſian ſtate,
Were on a peaceful errand come to treat:
Of theſe he murders one, he boils the fleſh,
And lays the mangled morſels in a diſh:
Some part he roaſts; then ſerves it up ſo dreſt,
And bids me welcome to this human feaſt.
Mov'd with diſdain, the table I o'erturn'd;
And with avenging flames the palace burn'd.
The tyrant in a fright, for ſhelter gains
The neighb'ring fields, and ſcours along the plains.
Howling he fled, and fain he wou'd have ſpoke,
But human voice his brutal tongue forſook.
About his lips the gather'd foam he churns,
And breathing ſlaughter, ſtill with rage he burns,
But on the bleating flock his fury turns.

His mantle, now his hide, with rugged hairs
Cleaves to his back; a famish'd face he bears;
His arms descend, his shoulders sink away,
To multiply his legs for chace of prey.
He grows a wolf, his hoariness remains,
And the same rage in other members reigns.
His eyes still sparkle in a narr'wer space,
His jaws retain the grin, and violence of his face.
This was a single ruin, but not one
Deserves so just a punishment alone.
Mankind's a monster, and th' ungodly times,
Confed'rate into guilt, are sworn to crimes.
All are alike involv'd in ill, and all,
Must by the same relentless fury fall.
Thus ended he; the greater Gods assent,
By clamours urging his severe intent;
The less fill up the cry for punishment.
Yet still with pity they remember man;
And mourn as much as heav'nly spirits can.
They ask, when those were lost of human birth,
What he would do with all his waste of earth?
If his dispeopled world he would resign
To beasts, a mute, and more ignoble line?
Neglected altars must no longer smoke,
If none were left to worship and invoke.
To whom the father of the Gods reply'd:
Lay that unnecessary fear aside:
Mine be the care new people to provide.
I will from wondrous principles ordain
A race unlike the first, and try my skill again.
Already had he toss'd the flaming brand,
And roll'd the thunder in his spacious hand;
Preparing to discharge on seas and land:
But stop'd, for fear thus violently driv'n,
The sparks should catch his axle-tree of heav'n.

Remembring, in the Fates, a time, when fire
Shou'd to the battlements of heav'n aſpire,
And all his blazing worlds above ſhould burn,
And all th' inferior globe to cinders turn.
His dire artillery thus diſmiſs'd, he bent
His thoughts to ſome ſecurer puniſhment:
Concludes to pour a watry deluge down;
And, what he durſt not burn, reſolves to drown.
The northern breath, that freezes floods he binds;
With all the race of cloud-diſpelling winds:
The South he loos'd, who night and horror brings;
And fogs are ſhaken from his flaggy wings.
From his divided beard two ſtreams he pours;
His head and rheumy eyes diſtil in ſhow'rs.
With rain his robe and heavy mantle flow:
And lazy miſts are low'ring on his brow,
Still as he ſwept along, with his clench'd fiſt,
He ſqueez'd the clouds; th' impriſon'd clouds, reſiſt;
The ſkies, from pole to pole, with peals refound;
And ſhow'rs inlarg'd come pouring on the ground.
Then clad in colours of a various die,
Junonian Iris breeds a new ſupply,
To feed the clouds: impetuous rain deſcends;
The bearded corn beneath the burden bends:
Defrauded clowns deplore their periſh'd grain;
And the long labours of the year are vain.
Nor from his patrimonial heav'n alone
Is Jove content to pour his vengeance down:
Aid from his brother of the ſeas he craves,
To help him with auxiliary waves.
The watry tyrant calls his brooks and floods,
Who roll from moſſy caves, their moiſt abodes;
And with perpetual urns his palace fill:
To whom, in brief, he thus imparts his will.
Small exhortation needs; your pow'rs employ:
And this bad world (ſo Jove requires) deſtroy.

Let

Let looſe the reins to all your watry ſtore:
Bear down the dams, and open ev'ry door.
The floods by nature enemies to land,
And proudly ſwelling with their new command,
Remove the living ſtones that ſtopp'd their way,
And guſhing from their ſource, augment the ſea.
Then, with his mace, their monarch ſtruck the ground:
With inward trembling earth receiv'd the wound:
And riſing ſtreams a ready paſſage found.
Th' expanded waters gather on the plain,
They float the fields, and overtop the grain;
Then ruſhing onwards, with a ſweepy ſway,
Bear flocks, and folds, and lab'ring hinds away.
Nor ſafe their dwellings were; for, ſap'd by floods,
Their houſes fell upon their houſhold Gods.
The ſolid piles too ſtrongly built to fall,
High o'er their heads behold a watry wall.
Now ſeas and earth were in confuſion loſt;
A world of waters, and without a coaſt.
One climbs a cliff; one in his boat is borne.
And ploughs above, where late he ſow'd his corn.
Others o'er chimney tops and turrets row,
And drop their anchors on the meads below:
Or downward driv'n, they bruiſe the tender vine,
Or toſs'd aloft, are knock'd againſt a pine.
And where of late the kids had cropp'd the graſs,
The monſters of the deep now take their place.
Inſulting Nereids on the cities ride,
And wond'ring dolphins o'er the palace glide,
On leaves, and maſts of mighty oaks, they brouze;
And their broad fins entangle in the boughs.
The frighted wolf now ſwims among the ſheep;
The yellow lion wanders in the deep;
His rapid force no longer helps the boar:
The ſtag ſwims faſter than he ran before.

The fowls, long beating on their wings in vain,
Deſpair of land, and drop into the main.
Now hills and vales no more diſtinction know,
And levell'd nature lies oppreſs'd below.
The moſt of mortals periſh in the flood,
The ſmall remainder dies for want of food.
A mountain of ſtupendous height there ſtands
Betwixt th' Athenian and Bœotian lands,
The bound of fruitful fields, while fields they were,
But then a field of waters did appear:
Parnaſſus is its name; whoſe forky riſe
Mounts thro' the clouds, and mates the lofty ſkies.
High on the ſummit of this dubious cliff,
Deucalion wafting moor'd his little ſkiff.
He with his wife were only left behind
Of periſh'd man; they two were human kind.
The mountain-nymphs and Themis they adore,
And from her oracles relief implore.
The moſt upright of mortal men was he;
The moſt ſincere and holy woman, ſhe.
When Jupiter, ſurveying earth from high,
Beheld it in a lake of water lie,
That, where ſo many millions lately liv'd,
But two, the beſt of either ſex, ſurviv'd,
He loos'd the northern wind; fierce Boreas flies
To puff away the clouds, and purge the ſkies:
Serenely, while he blows, the vapours driv'n
Diſcover heav'n to earth, and earth to heav'n.
The billows fall, while Neptune lays his mace
On the rough ſea, and ſmooths its furrow'd face.
Already Triton, at his call, appears
Above the waves; a Tyrian robe he wears;
And in his hand a crooked trumpet bears.
The ſov'reign bids him peaceful ſounds inſpire,
And give the waves the ſignal to retire.

His

His writhen ſhell he takes, whoſe narrow vent
Grows by degrees into a large extent;
Then gives it breath; the blaſt, with doubling ſound,
Runs the wide circuit of the world around.
The ſun firſt heard it, in his early Eaſt,
And met the rattling echos in the Weſt.
The waters, liſt'ning to the trumpet's roar,
Obey the ſummons, and forſake the ſhore.
A thin circumference of land appears;
And earth, but not at once, her viſage rears,
And peeps upon the ſeas from upper grounds:
The ſtreams, but juſt contain'd within their bounds,
By ſlow degrees into their channels crawl;
And earth increaſes as the waters fall.
In longer time the tops of trees appear,
Which mud on their diſhonour'd branches bear.
At length the world was all reſtor'd to view,
But deſolate, and of a ſickly hue:
Nature beheld herſelf, and ſtood aghaſt,
A diſmal deſert, and a ſilent waſte.
Which when Deucalion, with a piteous look,
Beheld, he wept, and thus to Pyrrha ſpoke:
Oh wife, oh ſiſter, oh of all thy kind
The beſt and only creature left behind,
By kindred, love, and now by dangers join'd;
Of multitudes, who breath'd the common air,
We two remain; a ſpecies in a pair:
The reſt the ſeas have ſwallow'd; nor have we
E'en of this wretched life a certainty.
The clouds are ſtill above; and, while I ſpeak,
A ſecond deluge o'er our heads may break.
Should I be ſnatch'd from hence, and thou remain,
Without relief, or partner of thy pain,
How coud'ſt thou ſuch a wretched life ſuſtain?
Should I be left, and thou be loſt, the ſea,
That bury'd her I lov'd, ſhou'd bury me.

Oh

Oh cou'd our father his old arts inſpire,
And make me heir of his informing fire,
That ſo I might aboliſh'd man retrieve,
And periſh'd people in new ſouls might live!
But Heaven is pleas'd, nor ought we to complain,
That we, th' examples of mankind, remain.
He ſaid: the careful couple join their tears,
And then invoke the Gods, with pious prayers.
Thus in devotion having eas'd their grief,
From ſacred oracles they ſeek relief:
And to Cephiſus' brook their way purſue:
The ſtream was troubled, but the ford they knew.
With living waters in the fountain bred,
They ſprinkle firſt their garments, and their head,
Then took the way which to the temple led.
The roofs were all defil'd with moſs and mire,
The deſert altars void of ſolemn fire.
Before the gradual proſtrate they ador'd,
The pavement kiſs'd; and thus the ſaint implor'd.
O righteous Themis, if the pow'rs above
By pray'rs are bent to pity, and to love;
If human mis'ries can move their mind;
If yet they can forgive, and yet be kind;
Tell how we may reſtore, by ſecond birth,
Mankind, and people deſolated earth.
Then thus the gracious Goddeſs, nodding, ſaid;
Depart, and with your veſtments veil your head:
And ſtooping lowly down, with looſen'd zones,
Throw each behind your backs your mighty mother's bones.
Amaz'd the pair, and mute with wonder, ſtand,
Till Pyrrha firſt refus'd the dire command.
Forbid it heav'n, ſaid ſhe, that I ſhould tear
Thoſe holy relics from the ſepulchre.
They ponder'd the myſterious words again,
For ſome new ſenſe; and long they ſought in vain.

At

At length Deucalion clear'd his cloudy brow,
And ſaid; the dark ænigma will allow
A meaning; which if well I underſtand,
From ſacrilege will free the God's command:
This earth our mighty mother is, the ſtones
In her capacious body are her bones:
Theſe we muſt caſt behind. With hope, and fear,
The woman did the new ſolution bear:
The man diffides in his own augury,
And doubts the Gods; yet both reſolve to try.
Deſcending from the mount, they firſt unbind
Their veſts, and veil'd they caſt the ſtones behind;
The ſtones (a miracle to mortal view,
But long tradition makes it paſs for true)
Did firſt the rigour of their kind expel,
And ſuppled into ſoftneſs as they fell;
Then ſwell'd, and ſwelling by degrees grew warm;
And took the rudiments of human form;
Imperfect ſhapes, in marble ſuch are ſeen,
When the rude chizzel does the man begin;
While yet the roughneſs of the ſtone remains,
Without the riſing muſcles, and the veins.
The ſappy parts, and next reſembling juice,
Were turn'd to moiſture, for the body's uſe:
Supplying humours, blood, and nouriſhment:
The reſt, too ſolid to receive a bent,
Converts to bones; and what was once a vein,
Its former name and nature did retain.
By help of pow'r divine, in little ſpace,
What the man threw aſſum'd a manly face;
And what the wife, renew'd the female race.
Hence we derive our nature, born to bear
Laborious life, and harden'd into care.

The reſt of animals, from teeming earth
Produc'd, in various forms receiv'd their birth.
The native moiſture, in its cloſe retreat,
Digeſted by the ſun's ætherial heat,

As in a kindly womb, began to breed:
Then ſwell'd, and quicken'd by the vital ſeed.
And ſome in leſs, and ſome in longer ſpace,
Were ripen'd into form, and took a ſev'ral face.
Thus when the Nile from Pharian fields is fled,
And ſeeks with ebbing tides, his ancient bed,
The fat manure with heav'nly fire is warm'd;
And cruſted creatures, as in wombs, are form'd:
Theſe, when they turn the glebe, the peaſants find:
Some rude, and yet unfiniſh'd in their kind:
Short of their limbs, a lame imperfect birth;
One half alive, and one of lifeleſs earth.
For heat and moiſture when in bodies join'd,
The temper that reſults from either kind
Conception makes; and fighting, till they mix,
Their mingled atoms in each other fix.
Thus nature's hand the genial bed prepares
With friendly diſcord, and with fruitful wars.
From hence the ſurface of the ground with mud
And ſlime beſmear'd (the fæces of the flood)
Receiv'd the rays of heav'n; and ſucking in
The ſeeds of heat new creatures did begin:
Some were of ſev'ral ſorts produc'd before;
But of new monſters earth created more.
Unwillingly, but yet ſhe brought to light
Thee, Python too, the wond'ring world to fright,
And the new nations with ſo dire a ſight.
So monſtrous was his bulk, ſo large a ſpace
Did his vaſt body and long train embrace:
Whom Phœbus baſking on a bank eſpy'd,
Ere now the God his arrows had not try'd,
But on the trembling deer, or mountain-goat;
At this new quarry he prepares to ſhoot.
Tho' ev'ry ſhaft took place, he ſpent the ſtore
Of his full quiver; and 'twas long before
Th' expiring ſerpent wallow'd in his gore.

Then

Then to preſerve the fame of ſuch a deed,
For Python ſlain, he Pythian games decreed,
Where noble youths for maſterſhip ſhould ſtrive,
To quoit, to run, and ſteeds and chariots drive.
The prize was fame, in witneſs of renown,
An oaken garland did the victor crown.
The laurel was not yet for triumphs born;
But ev'ry green alike by Phœbus worn
Did, with promiſcuous grace, his flowing locks adorn.

The TRANSFORMATION of DAPHNE into a LAUREL.

The firſt and faireſt of his loves was ſhe
Whom not blind fortune but the dire decree
Of angry Cupid forc'd him to deſire:
Daphne her name, and Peneus was her ſire.
Swell'd with the pride that new ſucceſs attends,
He ſees the ſtripling, while his bow he bends,
And thus inſults him: thou laſcivious boy,
Are arms like theſe for children to employ?
Know, ſuch atchievements are my proper claim;
Due to my vigour and unerring aim:
Reſiſtleſs are my ſhafts, and Python late,
In ſuch a feather'd death, has found his fate.
Take up thy torch, and lay my weapons by;
With that the feeble ſouls of lovers fry.
To whom the ſon of Venus thus reply'd:
Phœbus thy ſhafts are ſure on all beſide;
But mine on Phœbus: mine the fame ſhall be
Of all thy conqueſts, when I conquer thee.
He ſaid, and ſoaring ſwiftly wing'd his flight;
Nor ſtop'd but on Parnaſſus' airy height.
Two diff'rent ſhafts he from his quiver draws;
One to repel deſire, and one to cauſe.

One

One ſhaft is pointed with refulgent gold,
To bribe the love, and make the lover bold:
One blunt, and tipt with lead, whoſe baſe allay
Provokes diſdain, and drives deſire away.
The blunted bolt againſt the nymph he dreſt:
But with the ſharp transfix'd Apollo's breaſt.
Th' enamour'd Deity purſues the chace;
The ſcornful damſel ſhuns his loath'd embrace:
In hunting beaſts of prey her youth employs;
And Phœbe rivals in her rural joys.
With naked neck ſhe goes, and ſhoulders bare,
And with a fillet binds her flowing hair.
By many ſuitors ſought, ſhe mocks their pains,
And ſtill her vow'd virginity maintains.
Impatient of a yoke, the name of bride
She ſhuns, and hates the joys ſhe never try'd.
On wilds and woods ſhe fixes her deſire:
Nor knows what youth and kindly love inſpire.
Her father chides her oft: Thou ow'ſt, ſays he,
A huſband to thyſelf, a ſon to me.
She, like a crime, abhors the nuptial bed:
She glows with bluſhes, and ſhe hangs her head.
Then, caſting round his neck her tender arms,
Soothes him with blandiſhments, and filial charms:
Give me, my lord, ſhe ſaid, to live, and die,
A ſpotleſs maid, without the marriage tie.
'Tis but a ſmall requeſt; I beg no more
Than what Diana's father gave before.
The good old ſire was ſoften'd to conſent;
But ſaid her wiſh would prove her puniſhment:
For ſo much youth, and ſo much beauty join'd,
Oppos'd the ſtate, which her deſires deſign'd.
The God of light aſpiring to her bed,
Hopes what he ſeeks, with flatt'ring fancies fed;
And is by his own oracles miſled.
And as in empty fields the ſtubble burns,
Or nightly travellers, when day returns,

Their uſeleſs torches on dry hedges throw,
That catch the flames, and kindle all the row;
So burns the God, conſuming in deſire,
And feeding in his breaſt the fruitleſs fire:
Her well-turn'd neck he view'd (her neck was bare)
And on her ſhoulders her diſhevel'd hair:
Oh were it comb'd, ſaid he, with what a grace
Wou'd ev'ry waving curl become her face!
He view'd her eyes, like heav'nly lamps that ſhone;
He view'd her lips, too ſweet to view alone,
Her taper fingers, and her panting breaſt;
He praiſes all he ſees, and for the reſt
Believes the beauties yet unſeen are beſt.
Swift as the wind, the damſel fled away,
Nor did for theſe alluring ſpeeches ſtay:
Stay, nymph, he cry'd, I follow, not a foe:
Thus from the Lion trips the trembling Doe;
Thus from the Wolf the frighten'd Lamb removes,
And from purſuing Falcons fearful Doves;
Thou ſhunn'ſt a God, and ſhunn'ſt a God, that loves.
Ah leſt ſome thorn ſhould pierce thy tender foot,
Or thou ſhould'ſt fall in flying my purſuit!
To ſharp uneven ways thy ſteps decline;
Abate thy ſpeed, and I will bate of mine.
Yet think from whom thou doſt ſo raſhly fly;
Nor baſely born, nor ſhepherd's ſwain am I.
Perhaps thou know'ſt not my ſuperior ſtate;
And from that ignorance proceeds thy hate.
Me Claros, Delphos, Tenedos obey;
Theſe hands the Patareian ſcepter ſway.
The king of Gods begot me: what ſhall be,
Or is, or ever was, in fate, I ſee.
Mine is th' invention of the charming lyre;
Sweet notes, and heav'nly numbers I inſpire.
Sure is my bow unerring is my dart;
But ah! more deadly his, who pierc'd my heart.

Med'cine

Med'cine is mine, what herbs and ſimples grow
In fields and foreſts, all their pow'rs I know;
And am the great phyſician call'd below.
Alas, that fields and foreſts can afford
No remedies to heal their love-ſick lord!
To cure the pains of love, no plant avails;
And his own phyſic the phyſician fails.
She heard not half, ſo furiouſly ſhe flies,
And on her ear th' imperfect accent dies.
Fear gave her wings; and as ſhe fled, the wind
Increaſing ſpread her flowing hair behind;
And left her legs and thighs expos'd to view;
Which made the God more eager to purſue.
The God was young, and was too hotly bent
To loſe his time in empty compliment:
But led by love, and fir'd by ſuch a ſight,
Impetuouſly purſu'd his near delight.
As when th' impatient greyhound, ſlipt from far,
Bounds o'er the glebe, to courſe the fearful hare,
She in her ſpeed does all her ſafety lay;
And he with double ſpeed purſues the prey;
O'er-runs her at the fitting turn, and licks
His chaps in vain, and blows upon the flix:
She ſcapes, and for the neighb'ring covert ſtrives,
And gaining ſhelter doubts if yet ſhe lives:
If little things with great we may compare,
Such was the God, and ſuch the flying fair:
She, urg'd by fear, her feet did ſwiftly move,
But he more ſwiftly who was urg'd by love.
He gathers ground upon her in the chace:
Now breathes upon her hair, with nearer pace;
And juſt is faſt'ning on the wiſh'd embrace.
The nymph grew pale, and in a mortal fright,
Spent with the labour of ſo long a flight;
And now deſpairing caſt a mournful look,
Upon the ſtreams of her paternal brook:

Oh

Oh help ſhe cry'd, in this extremeſt need,
If Water-Gods are Deities indeed:
Gape, earth, and this unhappy wretch intomb:
Or change my form whence all my ſorrows come.
Scarce had ſhe finiſh'd, when her feet ſhe found
Benumb'd with cold, and faſten'd to the ground:
A filmy rind about her body grows,
Her hair to leaves, her arms extend to boughs:
The nymph is all into a laurel gone,
The ſmoothneſs of her ſkin remains alone.
Yet Phœbus loves her ſtill, and, caſting round
Her bole, his arms; ſome little warmth he found.
The tree ſtill panted in th' unfiniſh'd part,
Not wholly vegetive, and heav'd her heart.
He fix'd his lips upon the trembling rind;
It ſwerv'd aſide, and his embrace declin'd.
To whom the God: Becauſe thou canſt not be
My miſtreſs, I eſpouſe thee for my tree:
Be thou the prize of honour and renown;
The deathleſs poet, and the poem, crown.
Thou ſhalt the Roman feſtivals adorn,
And, after poets, be by victors worn.
Thou ſhalt returning Cæſar's triumph grace;
When pomps ſhall in a long proceſſion paſs:
Wreath'd on the poſt before his palace wait;
And be the ſacred guardian of the gate:
Secure from thunder, and unharm'd by Jove,
Unfading as th' immortal pow'rs above:
And as the locks of Phœbus are unſhorn,
So ſhall perpetual green thy boughs adorn.
The grateful tree was pleas'd with what he ſaid,
And ſhook the ſhady honours of her head.

The TRANSFORMATION of IO into a HEIFER.

An ancient foreſt in Theſſalia grows;
Which Tempe's pleaſant valley does incloſe:
Thro' this the rapid Peneus takes his courſe;
From Pindus rolling with impetuous force:
Miſts from the river's mighty fall ariſe;
And deadly damps incloſe the cloudy ſkies:
Perpetual fogs are hanging o'er the wood;
And ſounds of waters deaf the neighbourhood.
Deep, in a rocky cave, he makes abode:
A manſion proper for a mourning God.
Here he gives audience; iſſuing out decrees
To rivers, his dependent Deities.
On this occaſion hither they reſort,
To pay their homage, and to make their court.
All doubtful, whether to congratulate
His daughter's honour, or lament her fate.
Sperchæus, crown'd with poplar, firſt appears:
Then old Apidanus came crown'd with years:
Enipeus turbulent, Amphryſos tame;
And Æas laſt with lagging waters came.
Then of his kindred brooks a num'rous throng
Condole his loſs, and bring their urns along.
Not one was wanting of the watry train,
That fill'd his flood, or mingled with the main,
But Inachus, who, in his cave alone,
Wept not another's loſſes, but his own;
For his dear Io, whether ſtray'd, or dead,
To him uncertain, doubtful tears he ſhed.
He ſought her thro' the world, but ſought in vain;
And, no where finding, rather fear'd her ſlain.
Her juſt returning from her father's brook,
Jove had beheld her, with a deſiring look;

And,

And, oh, fair daughter of the flood, he ſaid,
Worthy alone of Jove's imperial bed,
Happy whoever ſhall thoſe charms poſſeſs;
The king of Gods (nor is thy lover leſs)
Invites thee to yon cooler ſhades, to ſhun
The ſcorching rays of the meridian ſun.
Nor ſhalt thou tempt the dangers of the grove
Alone without a guide; thy guide is Jove.
No puny pow'r, but he, whoſe high command
Is unconfin'd, who rules the ſeas and land,
And tempers thunder in his awful hand.
Oh fly not; for ſhe fled from his embrace
O'er Lerna's paſtures: he purſu'd the chace
Along the ſhades of the Lyrcæan plain;
At length the God who never aſks in vain,
Involv'd with vapours, imitating night,
Both air and earth; and then ſuppreſs'd her flight,
And, mingling force with love, enjoy'd the full delight.
Mean-time the jealous Juno, from on high
Survey'd the fruitful fields of Arcady;
And wonder'd that the miſt ſhould over-run
The face of day-light and obſcure the ſun.
No nat'ral cauſe ſhe found, from brooks or bogs,
Or marſhy lowlands to produce the fogs:
Then round the ſkies ſhe ſought for Jupiter,
Her faithleſs huſband; but no Jove was there.
Suſpecting now the worſt, or I, ſhe ſaid,
Am much miſtaken, or am much betray'd.
With fury ſhe precipitates her flight;
Diſpels the ſhadows of diſſembled night,
And to the day reſtores his native light.
Th' almighty leacher careful to prevent
The conſequence, foreſeeing her deſcent,
Transforms his miſtreſs in a trice: and now
In Io's place appears a lovely cow.

So ſleek her ſkin, ſo faultleſs was her make,
E'en Juno did unwilling pleaſure take
To ſee ſo fair a rival of her love;
And what ſhe was, and whence, enquir'd of Jove;
Of what fair herd, and from what pedigree?
The God half-caught was forc'd upon a lie;
And ſaid ſhe ſprung from earth. She took the word,
And begg'd the beauteous heifer of her lord.
What ſhou'd he do? 'twas equal ſhame to Jove
Or to relinquiſh, or betray his love:
Yet to refuſe ſo ſlight a gift, wou'd be
But more t' increaſe his conſort's jealouſy:
Thus fear, and love, by turns his heart aſſail'd;
And ſtronger love, had ſure at length prevail'd:
But ſome faint hope remain'd, his jealous queen
Had not the miſtreſs thro' the heifer ſeen.
The cautious Goddeſs of her gift poſſeſt,
Yet harbour'd anxious thoughts within her breaſt;
As ſhe who knew the falſhood of her Jove,
And juſtly fear'd ſome new relapſe of love.
Which to prevent, and to ſecure her care,
To truſty Argus ſhe commits the fair.
The head of Argus (as with ſtars the ſkies)
Was compaſs'd round, and wore an hundred eyes.
But two by turns their lids in ſlumber ſteep;
The reſt on duty ſtill their ſtation keep;
Nor could the total conſtellation ſleep.
Thus, ever preſent, to his eyes, and mind,
His charge was ſtill before him, tho' behind,
In fields he ſuffer'd her to feed by day;
But, when the ſetting ſun to night gave way,
The captive cow he ſummon'd with a call,
And drove her back, and ty'd her to the ſtall.
On leaves of trees, and bitter herbs ſhe fed,
Heav'n was her canopy, bare earth her bed;

So

So hardly lodg'd: and to digeſt her food,
She drank from troubled ſtreams, defil'd with mud.
Her woful ſtory fain ſhe wou'd have told,
With hands upheld, but had no hands to hold.
Her head to her ungentle keeper bow'd,
She ſtrove to ſpeak; ſhe ſpoke not, but ſhe low'd.
Affrighted with the noiſe, ſhe look'd around,
And ſeem'd t' inquire the author of the ſound.
Once on the banks where often ſhe had play'd,
(Her father's banks) ſhe came, and there ſurvey'd
Her alter'd viſage, and her branching head;
And ſtarting from herſelf ſhe wou'd have fled.
Her fellow-nymphs, familiar to her eyes,
Beheld, but knew her not in this diſguiſe.
Ev'n Inachus himſelf was ignorant;
And in his daughter did his daughter want.
She follow'd where her fellows went, as ſhe
Were ſtill a partner of the company:
They ſtroke her neck; the gentle heifer ſtands,
And her neck offers to their ſtroking hands.
Her father gave her graſs; the graſs ſhe took;
And lick'd his palms, and caſt a piteous look;
And in the language of her eyes ſhe ſpoke.
She wou'd have told her name, and aſk'd relief,
But, wanting words, in tears ſhe tells her grief.
Which with her foot ſhe makes him underſtand;
And prints the name of Io in the ſand.
Ah wretched me! her mournful father cry'd;
She, with a ſigh, to wretched me reply'd:
About her milk-white neck his arms he threw;
And wept, and then theſe tender words enſue.
And art thou ſhe, whom I have ſought around
The world, and have at length ſo ſadly found?
So found, is worſe than loſt: with mutual words
Thou anſwer'ſt not, no voice thy tongue affords:

But ſighs are deeply drawn from out thy breaſt;
And ſpeech deny'd by lowing is expreſs'd.
Unknowing, I prepar'd thy bridal bed;
With empty hopes of happy iſſue fed.
But now the huſband of a herd muſt be
Thy mate, and bell'wing ſons thy progeny.
Oh, were I mortal, death might bring relief!
But now my God-head but extends my grief;
Prolongs my woes, of which no end I ſee,
And makes me curſe my immortality.
More had he ſaid, but fearful of her ſtay,
The ſtarry guardian drove his charge away,
To ſome freſh paſture on a hilly height
He ſat himſelf, and kept her ſtill in ſight.

The EYES of ARGUS transformed into a PEACOCK'S TRAIN.

Now Jove no longer cou'd her ſuff'rings bear:
But call'd in haſte his airy meſſenger,
The ſon of Maïa, with ſevere decree
To kill the keeper, and to ſet her free.
With all his harneſs ſoon the God was ſped;
His flying hat was faſten'd on his head;
Wings on his heels were hung, and in his hand
He holds the virtue of the ſnaky wand.
The liquid air his moving pinions wound,
And, in the moment, ſhoot him on the ground.
Before he came in ſight, the crafty God
His wings diſmiſs'd, but ſtill retain'd his rod:
That ſleep-procuring wand wiſe Hermes took,
But made it ſeem to ſight a ſhepherd's hook.
With this he did a herd of goats controul;
Which by the way he met, and ſlily ſtole.
Clad like a country ſwain, he pip'd, and ſung;
And playing drove his jolly troop along.

With

With pleaſure Argus the muſician heeds;
But wonders much at thoſe new vocal reeds.
And whoſoe'er thou art, my friend, ſaid he,
Up hither drive thy goats, and play by me:
This hill has brouze for them, and ſhade for thee.
The God, who was with eaſe induc'd to climb,
Began diſcourſe to paſs away the time;
And ſtill betwixt his tuneful pipe he plies;
And watch'd his hour, to cloſe the keeper's eyes.
With much ado, he partly kept awake;
Not ſuff'ring all his eyes repoſe to take:
And aſk'd the ſtranger, who did reeds invent,
And whence began ſo rare an inſtrument.

The TRANSFORMATION of SYRINX into REEDS.

Then Hermes thus; a nymph of late there was,
Whoſe heav'nly form her fellows did ſurpaſs.
The pride and joy of fair Arcadia's plains;
Belov'd by Deities, ador'd by ſwains:
Syrinx her name, by Sylvans oft purſu'd,
As oft ſhe did the luſtful Gods delude:
The rural and the wood-land pow'rs diſdain'd;
With Cynthia hunted, and her rites maintain'd;
Like Phœbe clad, e'en Phœbe's ſelf ſhe ſeems,
So tall, ſo ſtraight, ſuch well-proportion'd limbs:
The niceſt eye did no diſtinction know,
But that the Goddeſs bore a golden bow:
Diſtinguiſh'd thus, the ſight ſhe cheated too.
Deſcending from Lycæus, Pan admires
The matchleſs nymph, and burns with new deſires.
A crown of pine upon his head he wore;
And thus began her pity to implore.
But ere he thus began, ſhe took her flight
So ſwift, ſhe was already out of ſight.

Nor ſtay'd to hear the courtſhip of the God;
But bent her courſe to Ladon's gentle flood:
There by the river ſtopt, and tir'd before,
Relief from water-nymphs her pray'rs implore.
Now while the luſtful God, with ſpeedy pace,
Juſt thought to ſtrain her in a ſtrict embrace,
He fills his arms with reeds, new riſing on the place.
And while he ſighs his ill ſucceſs to find,
The tender canes were ſhaken by the wind;
And breath'd a mournful air, unheard before;
That much ſurpriſing Pan, yet pleas'd him more.
Admiring this new muſic, thou, he ſaid,
Who canſt not be the partner of my bed,
At leaſt ſhalt be the conſort of my mind;
And often, often, to my lips be join'd.
He form'd the reeds, proportion'd as they are:
Unequal in their length, and wax'd with care,
They ſtill retain the name of his ungrateful fair.
While Hermes pip'd, and ſung, and told his tale,
The keeper's winking eyes began to fail,
And drowſy ſlumber on the lids to creep;
Till all the watchman was at length aſleep.
Then ſoon the God his voice and ſong ſuppreſt;
And with his pow'rful rod confirm'd his reſt:
Without delay his crooked falchion drew,
And at one fatal ſtroke the keeper flew.
Down from the rock fell the diſſever'd head,
Opening its eyes in death, and falling bled;
And mark'd the paſſage with a crimſon trail:
Thus Argus lies in pieces, cold and pale;
And all his hundred eyes, with all their light,
Are clos'd at once, in one perpetual night.
Theſe Juno takes, that they no more may fail,
And ſpreads them in her peacock's gaudy tail,
Impatient to revenge her injur'd bed,
She wreaks her anger on her rival's head;

With

With furies frights her from her native home,
And drives her gadding round the world to roam:
Nor ceas'd her madneſs and her flight, before
She touch'd the limits of the Pharian ſhore.
At length, arriving on the banks of Nile,
Wearied with length of ways, and worn with toil,
She laid her down: and leaning on her knees,
Invok'd the cauſe of all her miſeries:
And caſt her languiſhing regards above,
For help from heav'n, and her ungrateful Jove.
She ſigh'd, ſhe wept, ſhe low'd; 'twas all ſhe cou'd;
And with unkindneſs ſeem'd to tax the God.
Laſt, with an humble pray'r, ſhe begg'd repoſe,
Or death at leaſt to finiſh all her woes.
Jove heard her vows, and with a flatt'ring look,
In her behalf to jealous Juno ſpoke.
He caſt his arms about her neck, and ſaid:
Dame, reſt ſecure; no more thy nuptial bed
This nymph ſhall violate; by Styx I ſwear,
And every oath that binds the Thunderer.
The Goddeſs was appeas'd: and at the word
Was Io to her former ſhape reſtor'd.
The rugged hair began to fall away;
The ſweetneſs of her eyes did only ſtay,
Tho' not ſo large; her crooked horns decreaſe;
The wideneſs of her jaws and noſtrils ceaſe:
Her hoofs to hands return, in little ſpace;
The five long taper fingers take their place;
And nothing of the heifer now is ſeen,
Beſide the native whiteneſs of her ſkin.
Erected on her feet ſhe walks again,
And two the duty of the four ſuſtain.
She tries her tongue, her ſilence ſoftly breaks,
And fears her former lowings when ſhe ſpeaks:
A Goddeſs now thro' all th' Egyptian ſtate;
And ſerv'd by prieſts, who in white linen wait.

Her

Her ſon was Epaphus, at length believ'd
The ſon of Jove, and as a God receiv'd.
With ſacrifice ador'd, and public pray'rs,
He common temples with his mother ſhares.
Equal in years, and rival in renown
With Epaphus, the youthful Phaeton,
Like honour claims, and boaſts his fire the ſun.
His haughty looks, and his aſſuming air,
The ſon of Iſis could no longer bear:
Thou tak'ſt thy mother's word too far, ſaid he,
And haſt uſurp'd thy boaſted Pedigree.
Go, baſe pretender, to a borrow'd name,
Thus tax'd, he bluſh'd with anger, and with ſhame;
But ſhame repreſs'd his rage: the daunted youth
Soon ſeeks his mother, and enquires the truth:
Mother, ſaid he, this infamy was thrown
By Epaphus on you, and me your ſon.
He ſpoke in public, told it to my face;
Nor durſt I vindicate the dire diſgrace:
Ev'n I the bold, the ſenſible of wrong,
Reſtrain'd by ſhame, was forc'd to hold my tongue.
To hear an open ſlander, is a curſe:
But not to find an anſwer, is a worſe.
If I am heav'n-begot, aſſert your ſon
By ſome ſure ſign; and make my father known,
To right my honour, and redeem your own.
He ſaid, and ſaying caſt his arms about
Her neck, and begg'd her to reſolve the doubt.
'Tis hard to judge if Clymené were mov'd
More by his pray'r, whom ſhe ſo dearly lov'd,
Or more with fury fir'd, to find her name
Traduc'd, and made the ſport of common fame.
She ſtretch'd her arms to heav'n, and fix'd her eyes
On that fair planet that adorns the ſkies;
Now by thoſe beams, ſaid ſhe, whoſe holy fires
Conſume my breaſt, and kindle my deſires;

By

By him who ſees us both, and chears our ſight,
By him, the public miniſter of light,
I ſwear that Sun begot thee: if I lye,
Let him his chearful influence deny:
Let him no more this perjur'd creature ſee,
And ſhine on all the world but only me.
If ſtill you doubt your mother's innocence,
His eaſtern manſion is not far from hence;
With little pains you to his levee go,
And from himſelf your parentage may know.
With joy th' ambitious youth his mother heard,
And eager for the journey ſoon prepar'd.
He longs the world beneath him to ſurvey;
To guide the chariot, and to give the day:
From Meroe's burning ſands he bends his courſe,
Nor leſs in India feels his father's force;
His travel urging, till he came in ſight,
And ſaw the palace by the purple light.

MELEAGER and ATALANTA,

Out of the Eighth Book of

OVID's METAMORPHOSES.

Connection to the former Story.

Ovid, having told how Theſeus had freed Athens from the tribute of children, which was impoſed on them by Minos king of Creta, by killing the Minotaur, here makes a digreſſion to the ſtory of Meleager and Atalanta, which is one of the moſt inartificial connections in all the Metamorphoſes: for he only ſays, that Theſeus obtained ſuch honour from that combat, that all Greece had recourſe to him in their neceſſities; and, amongſt others, Calydon, though the hero of that country, prince Meleager, was then living.

FRom him, the Caledonians ſought relief;
Tho' valiant Meleagrus was their chief.
The cauſe, a boar, who ravag'd far and near:
Of Cynthia's wrath, th' avenging miniſter.
For Oeneus with autumnal plenty bleſs'd,
By gifts to heav'n his gratitude expreſs'd:
Cull'd ſheafs, to Ceres; to Lyæus, wine;
To Pan, and Pales, offer'd ſheep and kine;
And fat of olives, to Minerva's ſhrine.
Beginning from the rural Gods, his hand
Was lib'ral to the powers of high command:
Each Deity in ev'ry kind was bleſs'd,
Till at Diana's fane th' invidious honour ceas'd.

Wrath touches ev'n the Gods; the queen of night
Fir'd with diſdain, and jealous of her right,
Unhonour'd tho' I am, at leaſt, ſaid ſhe,
Not unreveng'd that impious act ſhall be.
Swift as the word, ſhe ſped the boar away,
With charge on thoſe devoted fields to prey.
No larger bulls the Ægyptian paſtures feed,
And none ſo large Sicilian meadows breed:
His eye-balls glare with fire, ſuffus'd with blood;
His neck ſhoots up a thick ſet thorny wood;
His briſtled back a trench impal'd appears,
And ſtands erected, like a field of ſpears.
Froth fills his chaps, he ſends a grunting ſound,
And part he churns, and part beſoams the ground.
For tuſks with Indian elephants he ſtrove,
And Jove's own thunder from his mouth he drove.
He burns the leaves; the ſcorching blaſt invades
The tender corn, and ſhrivels up the blades:
Or ſuff'ring not their yellow beards to rear,
He tramples down the ſpikes, and intercepts the year
In vain the barns expect their promis'd load,
Nor barns at home, nor ricks are heap'd abroad:
In vain the hinds the threſhing-floor prepare,
And exerciſe their flails in empty air.
With olives ever green the ground is ſtrow'd,
And grapes ungather'd ſhed their gen'rous blood.
Amid the fold he rages, nor the ſheep
Their ſhepherds, nor the grooms their bulls can keep.
From fields to walls the frighted rabble run,
Nor think themſelves ſecure within the town:
Till Meleagrus, and his choſen crew,
Contemn the danger, and the praiſe purſue.
Fair Leda's twins, (in time to ſtars decreed)
One fought on foot, one curb'd the fiery ſteed;
Then iſſued forth fam'd Jaſon after theſe,
Who mann'd the foremoſt ſhip that ſail'd the ſeas;

Then

Then Theſeus join'd with bold Pirithous came:
A ſingle concord in a double name:
The Theſtian ſons, Idas who ſwiftly ran,
And Ceneus, once a woman, now a man.
Lynceus, with eagle's eyes, and lion's heart;
Leucippus, with his never-erring dart;
Acaſtus, Phileus, Phœnix, Telamon,
Echion, Lelex, and Eurytion,
Achilles' father, and great Phocus' ſon;
Dryas the fierce, and Hippaſus the ſtrong;
With twice old Iolas, and Neſtor then but young.
Laertes active, and Anœus bold;
Mopſus the ſage, who future things foretold;
And t'other ſeer yet by his wife unfold.
A thouſand others of immortal fame;
Among the reſt fair Atalanta came,
Grace of the woods: a diamond buckle bound
Her veſt behind, that elſe had flow'd upon the ground,
And ſhew'd her buſkin'd legs; her head was bare,
But for her native ornament of hair;
Which in a ſimple knot was ty'd above,
Sweet negligence, unheeded bait of love!
Her ſounding quiver on her ſhoulder ty'd,
One hand a dart, and one a bow ſupply'd.
Such was her face, as in a nymph diſplay'd
A fair fierce boy, or in a boy betray'd
The bluſhing beauties of a modeſt maid.
The Caledonian chief at once the dame
Beheld, at once his heart receiv'd the flame,
With heav'ns averſe. O happy youth, he cry'd;
For whom thy fates reſerve ſo fair a bride!
He ſigh'd, and had no leiſure more to ſay;
His honour call'd his eyes another way,
And force him to purſue the now neglected prey.
There ſtood a foreſt on the mountain's brow,
Which over-look'd the ſhaded plains below.

No

No ſounding ax preſum'd thoſe trees to bite;
Coeval with the world, a venerable ſight.
The heroes there arriv'd, ſome ſpread around
The toils, ſome ſearch the footſteps on the ground,
Some from the chains the faithful dogs unbound.
Of action eager, and intent on thought,
The chiefs their honourable danger ſought:
A valley ſtood below; the common drain
Of waters from above, and falling rain:
The bottom was a moiſt and marſhy ground,
Whoſe edges were with bending oſiers crown'd;
The knotty bulruſh next in order ſtood,
And all within of reeds a trembling wood.
From hence the boar was rous'd, and ſprung amain;
Like lightning ſudden on the warrior-train;
Beats down the trees before him, ſhakes the ground,
The foreſt ecchoes to the crackling ſound;
Shout the fierce youth, and clamours ring around.
All ſtood with their protended ſpears prepar'd,
With broad ſteel heads the brandiſh'd weapons glar'd.
The beaſt impetuous with his tuſks aſide
Deals glancing wounds; the fearful dogs divide:
All ſpend their mouth aloft, but none abide.
Echion threw the firſt, but miſs'd his mark,
And ſtuck his boar-ſpear on a maple's bark.
Then Jaſon; and his javelin ſeem'd to take,
But fail'd with over-force, and whizz'd above his back.
Mopſus was next; but ere he threw, addreſs'd
To Phœbus thus: O patron, help thy prieſt;
If I adore, and ever have ador'd
Thy pow'r divine, thy preſent aid afford;
That I may reach the beaſt. The God allow'd
His pray'r, and, ſmiling, gave him what he could:
He reach'd the ſavage, but no blood he drew,
Dian unarm'd the javelin as it flew.
This chaf'd the boar, his noſtrils flames expire,
And his red eye-balls roll with living fire.

Whirl'd from a ſling, or from an engine thrown;
Amidſt the foes, ſo flies a mighty ſtone,
As flew the beaſt: the left wing put to flight,
The chiefs o'erborn, he ruſhes on the right.
Empalamos and Pelagon he laid
In duſt, and next to death, but for their fellows aid.
Oneſimus far'd worſe, prepar'd to fly;
The fatal fang drove deep within his thigh,
And cut the nerves; the nerves no more ſuſtain
The bulk; the bulk unprop'd falls headlong on the plain.
Neſtor had fail'd the fall of Troy to ſee,
But leaning on his lance, he vaulted on a tree;
Then gathering up his feet, look'd down with fear;
And thought his monſtrous foe was ſtill too near.
Againſt a ſtump his tuſk the monſter grinds,
And in the ſharpen'd edge new vigour finds;
Then, truſting to his arms, young Othrys found;
And ranch'd his hips with one continu'd wound.
Now Leda's twins, the future ſtars, appear;
White were their habits, white their horſes were;
Conſpicuous both, and both in act to throw,
Their trembling lances brandiſh'd at the foe:
Nor had they miſs'd; but he to thickets fled,
Conceal'd from aiming ſpears, not pervious to the ſteed.
But Telamon ruſh'd in, and happ'd to meet
A riſing root, that held his faſten'd feet;
So down he fell, whom, ſprawling on the ground,
His brother from the wooden gyves unbound.
Mean time the virgin-huntreſs was not ſlow
T' expel the ſhaft from her contracted bow:
Beneath his ear the faſtened arrow ſtood,
And from the wound appear'd the trickling blood.
She bluſh'd for joy: But Meleagrus rais'd
His voice with loud applauſe, and the fair archer prais'd
He was the firſt to ſee, and firſt to ſhow
His friends the marks of the ſucceſsful blow.

Nor

Nor ſhall thy valour want the praiſes due,
He ſaid; a virtuous envy ſeiz'd the crew.
They ſhout; the ſhouting animates their hearts,
And all at once employ their thronging darts;
But out of order thrown, in air they join;
And multitude makes fruſtrate the deſign.
With both his hands the proud Ancæus takes,
And flouriſhes his double-biting ax:
Then forward to his fate, he took a ſtride
Before the reſt, and to his fellows cry'd,
Give place, and mark the diff'rence, if you can,
Between a woman-warrior and a man;
The boar is doom'd; nor, tho' Diana lend
Her aid, Diana can her beaſt defend.
Thus boaſted he; then ſtretch'd, on tiptoe ſtood,
Secure to make his empty promiſe good.
But the more wary beaſt prevents the blow,
And upward rips the groin of his audacious foe.
Ancæus falls; his bowels from the wound
Ruſh out, and clotted blood diſtains the ground.
Pirithous, no ſmall portion of the war,
Preſs'd on, and ſhook his lance: to whom from far,
Thus Theſeus cry'd: O ſtay, my better part,
My more than miſtreſs; of my heart, the heart.
The ſtrong may fight aloof: Ancæus try'd
His force too near, and by preſuming dy'd:
He ſaid, and while he ſpake, his javelin threw;
Hiſſing in air th' unerring weapon flew;
But on an arm of oak, that ſtood betwixt
The marks-man and the mark, his lance he fixt.
Once more bold Jaſon threw, but fail'd to wound
The boar, and ſlew an undeſerving hound;
And thro' the dog the dart was nail'd to ground.
Two ſpears from Meleager's hand were ſent,
With equal force, but various in th' event:

The firſt was fix'd in earth, the ſecond ſtood
On the boar's briſtled back, and deeply drank his blood.
Now while the tortur'd ſavage turns around,
And flings about his foam, impatient of the wound.
The wound's great author cloſe at hand provokes
His rage, and plies him with redoubled ſtrokes;
Wheels as he wheels; and with his pointed dart
Explores the neareſt paſſage to his heart.
Quick and more quick he ſpins in giddy gires,
Then falls, and in much foam his ſoul expires.
This act with ſhouts heav'n high the friendly band
Applaud, and ſtrain in theirs the victor's hand.
Then all approach the ſlain with vaſt ſurpriſe,
Admire on what a breadth of earth he lies;
And ſcarce ſecure, reach out their ſpears afar,
And blood their points, to prove their partnerſhip of war.
But he, the conqu'ring chief, his foot impreſs'd
On the ſtrong neck of that deſtructive beaſt;
And gazing on the nymph with ardent eyes,
Accept, ſaid he, fair Nonacrine, my prize,
And, tho' inferior, ſuffer me to join
My labours, and my part of praiſe, with thine:
At this preſents her with the tuſky head
And chine, with riſing briſtles roughly ſpread.
Glad, ſhe receiv'd the gift; and ſeem'd to take
With double pleaſure, for the giver's ſake.
The reſt were ſeiz'd with ſullen diſcontent,
And a deaf murmur thro' the ſquadron went:
All envy'd; but the Theſtyan brethren ſhow'd
The leaſt reſpect, and thus they vent their ſpleen aloud:
Lay down thoſe honour'd ſpoils, nor think to ſhare,
Weak woman as thou art, the prize of war:
Ours is the title, thine a foreign claim,
Since Meleagrus from our lineage came.
Truſt not thy beauty; but reſtore the prize,
Which he, beſotted on that face and eyes,

Wou'd rend from us. At this, inflam'd with ſpite,
From her they ſnatch the gift, from him the giver's right.
But ſoon th' impatient prince his fauchion drew,
And cry'd, Ye robbers of another's due,
Now learn the diff'rence, at your proper coſt,
Betwixt true valour, and an empty boaſt.
At this advanc'd, and ſudden as the word,
In proud Plexippus' boſom plung'd the ſword:
Toxeus amaz'd, and with amazement ſlow,
Or to revenge, or ward the coming blow,
Stood doubting; and, while doubting thus he ſtood,
Receiv'd the ſteel bath'd in his brother's blood.
Pleas'd with the firſt, unknown the ſecond news,
Althæa to the temples pays their dues
For her ſon's conqueſt; when at length appear
Her griſly brethren ſtretch'd upon the bier:
Pale, at the ſudden ſight, ſhe chang'd her cheer,
And with her cheer her robes; but hearing tell
The cauſe, the manner, and by whom they fell,
'Twas grief no more, or grief and rage were one
Within her ſoul; at laſt 'twas rage alone;
Which burning upwards in ſucceſſion dries
The tears that ſtood conſid'ring in her eyes.
There lay a log unlighted on the earth:
When ſhe was lab'ring in the throes of birth,
For th' unborn chief the fatal ſiſters came,
And rais'd it up, and toſs'd it on the flame:
Then on the rock a ſcanty meaſure place
Of vital flax, and turn'd the wheel apace;
And turning ſung, to this red brand and thee,
O new-born babe, we give an equal deſtiny:
So vaniſh'd out of view. The frighted dame
Sprung haſty from her bed, and quench'd the flame:
The log in ſecret lock'd, ſhe kept with care,
And that, while thus preſerv'd, preſerv'd her heir.

This brand ſhe now produc'd; and firſt ſhe ſtrows
The hearth with heaps of chips, and after blows;
Thrice heav'd her hand, and heav'd, ſhe thrice repreſs'd:
The ſiſter and the mother long conteſt,
Two doubtful titles in one tender breaſt;
And now her eyes and cheeks with fury glow,
Now pale her cheeks, her eyes with pity flow;
Now low'ring looks preſage approaching ſtorms,
And now prevailing love her face reforms:
Reſolv'd, ſhe doubts again; the tears, ſhe dry'd
With bluſhing rage, are by new tears ſupply'd;
And as a ſhip, which winds and waves aſſail,
Now with the current drives, now with the gale,
Both oppoſite, and neither long prevail.
She feels a double force, by turns obeys
Th' imperious tempeſt, and th' impetuous ſeas:
So fares Althæa's mind, firſt ſhe relents
With pity, of that pity then repents:
Siſter and mother long the ſcales divide,
But the beam nodded on the ſiſter's ſide.
Sometimes ſhe ſoftly ſigh'd, then roar'd aloud;
But ſighs were ſtifled in the cries of blood.
The pious impious wretch at length decreed,
To pleaſe her brother's ghoſts, her ſon ſhould bleed;
And when the funeral flames began to riſe,
Receive ſhe ſaid, a ſiſter's ſacrifice:
A mother's bowels burn: high in her hand,
Thus while ſhe ſpoke, ſhe held the fatal brand;
Then thrice before the kindled pile ſhe bow'd,
And the three Furies thrice invok'd aloud:
Come, come, revenging ſiſters, come and view
A ſiſter paying her dead brother's due:
A crime I puniſh, and a crime commit;
But blood for blood, and death for death is fit:
Great crimes muſt be with greater crimes repaid,
And ſecond funerals on the former laid.

Let the whole houſhold in one ruin fall,
And may Diana's curſe o'ertake us all.
Shall fate to happy Oeneus ſtill allow
One ſon, while Theſtius ſtands depriv'd of two?
Better three loſt, than one unpuniſh'd go.
Take then, dear ghoſts, (while yet admitted new
In hell you wait my duty) take your due:
A coſtly off'ring on your tomb is laid,
When with my blood the price of yours is paid.
Ah! whither am I hurry'd? Ah! forgive,
Ye ſhades, and let your ſiſter's iſſue live:
A mother cannot give him death; tho' he
Deſerves it, he deſerves it not from me.
Then ſhall th' unpuniſh'd wretch inſult the ſlain,
Triumphant live, not only live, but reign?
While you thin ſhades, the ſport of winds, are toſt,
O'er dreary plains, or tread the burning coaſt.
I cannot, cannot bear; 'tis paſt, 'tis done;
Periſh this impious, this deteſted ſon;
Periſh his ſire, and periſh I withal;
And let the houſe's heir, and the hop'd kingdom fall.
Where is the mother fled, her pious love,
And where the pains which with ten months I ſtrove!
Ah! hadſt thou dy'd my ſon, in infant years,
Thy little herſe hadſt been bedew'd with tears.
Thou liv'ſt by me; to me thy breath reſign;
Mine is the merit, the demerit thine.
Thy life by double title I require;
Once giv'n at birth, and once preſerv'd from fire:
One murder pay, or add one murder more,
And me to them who fell by thee reſtore.
I would, but cannot: my ſon's image ſtands
Before my ſight; and now their angry hands
My brothers hold, and vengeance theſe exact,
This pleads compaſſion, and repents the fact.

He pleads in vain, and I pronounce his doom:
My brothers, tho' unjuſtly, ſhall o'ercome.
But having pay'd their injur'd ghoſts their due,
My ſon requires my death, and mine ſhall his purſue.
At this for the laſt time ſhe lifts her hand,
Averts her eyes, and half unwilling drops the brand.
The brand, amid the flaming fuel thrown,
Or drew, or ſeem'd to draw a dying groan;
The fires themſelves but faintly lick'd their prey,
Then loath'd their impious food, and would have ſhrunk away.
Juſt then the hero caſt a doleful cry,
And in thoſe abſent flames began to fry:
The blind contagion rag'd within his veins;
But he with manly patience bore his pains:
He fear'd not fate, but only griev'd to die
Without an honeſt wound, and by a death ſo dry.
Happy Ancæus, thrice aloud he cry'd,
With what becoming fate in arms he dy'd!
Then call'd his brothers, ſiſters, ſire, around,
And her to whom his nuptial vows were bound;
Perhaps his mother; a long ſigh he drew,
And his voice failing, took his laſt adieu:
For as the flames augment, and as they ſtay
At their full height, then languiſh to decay,
They riſe, and ſink by fits; at laſt they ſoar
In one bright blaze, and then deſcend no more:
Juſt ſo his inward heats, at height, impair,
Till the laſt burning breath ſhoots out the ſoul in air.
Now lofty Calydon in ruins lies;
All ages, all degrees unſluice their eyes;
And heav'n and earth reſound with murmurs, groans, and cries.
Matrons and maidens beat their breaſts, and tear
Their habits, and root up their ſcatter'd hair.

The

The wretched father, father now no more,
With ſorrow ſunk, lies proſtrate on the floor,
Deforms his hoary locks with duſt obſcene,
And curſes age, and loaths a life prolong'd with pain.
By ſteel her ſtubborn ſoul his mother freed,
And puniſh'd on herſelf her impious deed.
Had I an hundred tongues, a wit ſo large
As could their hundred offices diſcharge;
Had Phœbus all his Helicon beſtow'd,
In all the ſtreams inſpiring all the God;
Thoſe tongues, that wit, thoſe ſtreams, that God in vain
Wou'd offer to deſcribe his ſiſters' pain:
They beat their breaſts with many a bruiſing blow,
Till they turn livid, and corrupt the ſnow.
The corps they cheriſh, while the corps remains,
And exercise and rub with fruitleſs pains;
And when to fun'ral flames 'tis borne away,
They kiſs the bed on which the body lay:
And when thoſe fun'ral flames no longer burn,
(The duſt compos'd within a pious urn)
Ev'n in that urn their brother they confeſs,
And hug it in their arms, and to their boſoms preſs.
His tomb is rais'd; then, ſtretch'd along the ground.
Thoſe living monuments his tomb ſurround:
Ev'n to his name, inſcrib'd, their tears they pay,
Till tears and kiſſes wear his name away.
But Cynthia now had all her fury ſpent,
Not with leſs ruin, than a race, content:
Excepting Gorge, periſh'd all the ſeed,
And her whom heav'n for Hercules decreed.
Satiate at laſt, no longer ſhe purſu'd
The weeping ſiſters; but with wings endu'd,
And horny beaks, and ſent to flit in air;
Who yearly round the tomb in feather'd flocks repair.

BAUCIS and PHILEMON.

Out of the Eighth BOOK of

OVID's METAMORPHOSES.

The author, purſuing the deeds of Theſeus, relates how he, with his friend Pirithous, were invited by Achelous, the River-God, to ſtay with him, till his waters were abated. Achelous entertains them with a relation of his own love to Perimele, who was changed into an iſland by Neptune, at his requeſt. Pirithous, being an atheiſt, derides the legend, and denies the power of the Gods to work that miracle. Lelex, another companion of Theſeus, to confirm the ſtory of Achelous, relates another metamorphoſis of Baucis and Philemon into trees; of which he was partly an eye-witneſs.

THUS Achelous ends: his audience hear
With admiration, and admiring fear
The pow'rs of heav'n; except Ixion's ſon,
Who laugh'd at all the Gods, believ'd in none;
He ſhook his impious head, and thus replies,
Theſe legends are no more than pious lies:
You attribute too much to heav'nly ſway,
To think they give us forms, and take away.
The reſt, of better minds, their ſenſe declar'd
Againſt this doctrine, and with horror heard.
Then Lelex roſe, an old experienc'd man,
And thus with ſober gravity began:
Heav'n's power is infinite: earth, air, and ſea,
The manufacture maſs, the making power obey;

By

By proof to clear your doubt; in Phrygian ground
Two neighb'ring trees, with walls encompaſs'd round,
Stand on a mod'rate riſe, with wonder ſhown,
One a hard oak, a ſofter linden one:
I ſaw the place and them, by Pittheus ſent
To Phrygian realms, my grandſire's government.
Not far from thence is ſeen a lake, the haunt
Of coots, and of the fiſhing cormorant:
Here Jove with Hermes came; but in diſguiſe
Of mortal men conceal'd their Deities:
One laid aſide his thunder, one his rod;
And many toilſome ſteps together trod;
For harbour at a thouſand doors they knock'd,
Not one of all the thouſand but was lock'd.
At laſt an hoſpitable houſe they found,
A homely ſhed; the roof, not far from ground,
Was thatch'd with reeds and ſtraw together bound.
There Baucis and Philemon liv'd, and there
Had liv'd long marry'd, and a happy pair:
Now old in love; tho' little was their ſtore,
Inur'd to want, their poverty they bore,
Nor aim'd at wealth, profeſſing to be poor.
For maſter or for ſervant here to call,
Was all alike, where only two were all.
Command was none, where equal love was paid,
Or rather both commanded, both obey'd.
From lofty roofs the Gods repuls'd before,
Now ſtooping, enter'd thro' the little door;
The man (their hearty welcome firſt expreſs'd)
A common ſettle drew for either gueſt,
Inviting each his weary limbs to reſt.
But ere they ſat, officious Baucis lays
Two cuſhions ſtuff'd with ſtraw, the ſeat to raiſe;
Coarſe, but the beſt ſhe had; then takes the load
Of aſhes from the hearth, and ſpreads abroad
The living coals, and left they ſhou'd expire,
With leaves and barks ſhe feeds her infant-fire:

It ſmokes, and then with trembling breath ſhe blows,
Till in a chearful blaze the flames aroſe.
With bruſh-wood and with chips ſhe ſtrengthens theſe,
And adds at laſt the boughs of rotten trees.
The fire thus form'd, ſhe ſets the kettle on,
(Like burniſh'd gold the little ſeether ſhone)
Next took the coleworts which her huſband got
From his own ground (a ſmall well water'd ſpot;)
She ſtripp'd the ſtalks of all their leaves; the beſt
She cull'd, and then with handy care ſhe dreſs'd.
High o'er the hearth a chine of bacon hung;
Good old Philemon ſeiz'd it with a prong,
And from the ſooty rafter drew it down,
Then cut a ſlice, but ſcarce enough for one:
Yet a large portion of a little ſtore,
Which for their ſakes alone he wiſh'd were more.
This in the pot he plung'd without delay,
To tame the fleſh, and drain the ſalt away,
The time between, before the fire they ſat,
And ſhorten'd the delay by pleaſing chat.
A beam there was, on which a beechen pail
Hung by the handle, on a driven nail:
This fill'd with water, gently warm'd, they ſet
Before their gueſts; in this they bath'd their feet,
And after with clean towels dry'd their ſweat:
This done, the hoſt produc'd the genial bed,
Sallow the foot, the borders, and the ſted,
Which with no coſtly coverlet they ſpread;
But coarſe old garments, yet ſuch robes as theſe
They laid alone, at feaſts, on holydays,
The good old houſewife, tucking up her gown,
The table ſets; th' invited Gods lie down.
The trivet-table of a foot was lame,
A blot which prudent Baucis overcame,
Who thruſt, beneath the limping leg, a ſherd,
So was the mended board exactly rear'd:

Then

Then rubb'd it o'er with newly gather'd mint,
A wholeſome herb, that breath'd a grateful ſcent.
Pallas began the feaſt, where firſt was ſeen
The party-colour'd olive, black and green:
Autumnal cornels next in order ſerv'd,
In lees of wine well pickled and preſerv'd:
A garden-ſallad was the third ſupply,
Of endive, radiſhes, and ſuccory:
Then curds and cream, the flow'r of country fare,
And new-laid eggs, which Baucis' buſy care,
Turn'd by a gentle fire, and roaſted rare.
All theſe in earthen-ware were ſerv'd to board;
And next in place, an earthen pitcher ſtor'd
With liquor of the beſt the cottage cou'd afford.
This was the table's ornament, and pride,
With figures wrought: like pages at his ſide
Stood beechen bowls; and theſe were ſhining clean,
Varniſh'd with wax without, and lin'd within.
By this the boiling kettle had prepar'd,
And to the table ſent the ſmoking lard;
On which with eager appetite they dine,
A ſav'ry bit that ſerv'd to reliſh wine:
The wine itſelf was ſuiting to the reſt,
Still working in the Muſt, and lately preſs'd.
The ſecond courſe ſucceeds like that before,
Plums, apples, nuts, and, of their wintry-ſtore,
Dry figs and grapes, and wrinkled dates were ſet
In caniſters, t' inlarge the little treat:
All theſe a milk-white honey-comb ſurround,
Which in the midſt the country-banquet crown'd.
But the kind hoſts their entertainment grace
With hearty welcome, and an open face:
In all they did, you might diſcern with eaſe
A willing mind, and a deſire to pleaſe.

Mean time the beechen bowls went round, and ſtill,
Tho' often empty'd, were obſerv'd to fill,

Fill'd

Fill'd without hands, and of their own accord
Ran without feet, and danc'd about the board.
Devotion ſeiz'd the pair, to ſee the feaſt
With wine, and of no common grape, increas'd:
And up they held their hands, and fell to pray'r,
Excuſing, as they cou'd, their *country fare.*
One gooſe they had ('twas all they *cou'd allow*)
A wakeful centry, and on duty now,
Whom to the Gods for ſacrifice they vow:
Her, with malicious zeal, the couple view'd;
She ran for life, and limping they purſu'd:
Full well the fowl perceiv'd their bad intent,
And wou'd not make her maſter's compliment;
But perſecuted, to the pow'rs ſhe flies,
And cloſe between the legs of Jove ſhe lies.
He, with a gracious ear, the ſuppliant heard,
And ſav'd her life; then what he was declar'd,
And own'd the God. The neighbourhood, ſaid he,
Shall juſtly periſh for impiety:
You ſtand alone exempted; but obey
With ſpeed, and follow where we lead the way:
Leave theſe accurs'd; and to the mountain's height
Aſcend; nor once look backward in your flight.
They haſte, and what their tardy feet deny'd,
The Truſty ſtaff (their better leg) ſupply'd.
An arrow's flight they wanted to the top,
And there ſecure, but ſpent with travel, ſtop;
Then turn their now no more forbidden eyes;
Loſt in a lake the floated level lies:
A watry deſert covers all the plains,
Their cot alone, as in an iſle, remains:
Wondring with peeping eyes, while they deplore
Their neighbours fate, and country now no more,
Their little ſhed ſcarce large enough for two,
Seems, from the ground increas'd, in height and bulk to grow.

A ſtately temple ſhoots within the ſkies:
The crotchets of their cot in columns riſe:
The pavement poliſh'd marble they behold,
The gates with ſculpture grac'd, the ſpires and tiles of gold.
Then thus the ſire of Gods, with looks ſerene,
Speak thy deſire, thou only juſt of men;
And thou, O woman, only worthy found
To be with ſuch a man in marriage bound.
A while they whiſper; then, to Jove addreſs'd,
Philemon thus prefers their joint requeſt.
We crave to ſerve before your ſacred ſhrine,
And offer at your altars rites divine:
And ſince not any action of our life,
Has been polluted with domeſtic ſtrife,
We beg one hour of death; that neither ſhe
With widow's tears may live to bury me,
Nor weeping I, with wither'd arms, may bear
My breathleſs Baucis to the ſepulchre.
The Godheads ſign their ſuit. They run their race
In the ſame tenor all th' appointed ſpace;
Then, when their hour was come, while they relate
Theſe paſt adventures at the temple-gate,
Old Baucis is by old Philemon ſeen
Sprouting with ſudden leaves of ſprightly green:
Old Baucis look'd where old Philemon ſtood,
And ſaw his lengthen'd arms a ſprouting wood:
New roots their faſten'd feet begin to bind,
Their bodies ſtiffen in a riſing rind:
Then, ere the bark above their ſhoulders grew,
They give and take at once their laſt adieu;
At once, farewel, O faithful ſpouſe they ſaid;
At once th' incroaching rinds their cloſing lips invade.
Ev'n yet, an ancient Tyanæan ſhows
A ſpreading oak, that near a linden grows;

The